Le roi Abgar d'Edesse
et le saint Mandylion



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De la Foi orthodoxe, IV 16, sur les icônes, par St Jean Damascène
Petit poème

Présentation

La "légende d'Abgar"

Eusèbe de Césarée cite, dans son Histoire ecclésiastique (HE I. XIII), une correspondance que le roi Abgar d'Édesse — que l'on identifie comme étant "Abgar V Oukama" (= "le noir") — aurait eue avec Jésus pour le prier de venir le guérir d'une maladie réputée incurable. Dans sa réponse, Jésus aurait écrit :
"Lorsque j'aurai été élevé, je t'enverrai un de mes disciples pour te guérir de ton infirmité et te donner la vie, à toi et à ceux qui sont avec toi."
Eusèbe rapporte que le disciple en question fut Thaddée, qui évangélisa la ville d'Édesse et son roi.

Toutefois, déjà dans le Décret de Gélase [1], comme encore actuellement, cette correspondance est regardée comme apocryphe.

Cet épisode connut une fortune certaine, et divers textes le rapportent dans une rédaction amplifiée et grossie de plusieurs légendes .

Le Mandylion d'Edesse

Ainsi, Moïse de Khorène (fin Ve siècle) dans son Histoire d'Arménie (Liv II, chap 30 à 33) reprend le récit d'Eusèbe en y ajoutant d'autres correspondances avec Tibère, Nerses, Ardashes… Concernant la correspondance d'Abgar et Jésus, il est fait mention que le messager d'Abgar, "Anan" rapporta la réponse de Jésus, "ainsi que l'image du Sauveur qui se trouve encore à présent à Edesse".

D'autre part, la Doctrine d'Addaï (IVe ou Ve siècle), précise qu'en plus d'être le messager d'Abgar, Hannan était le "peintre du roi", et qu'il réalisa un portrait de Jésus. (Addaï est la forme syriaque de Thaddée).

Une autre variante tardive, les Actes de l'apôtre Thaddée (VIIe siècle) indiquent qu'Annanias (= Hannan = Anan), cherchait à fixer dans sa mémoire les traits de Jésus, pour en faire une description à son roi, mais n'y parvenait pas. Jésus s'étant lavé le visage s'essuya avec un linge qu'il remit à Annanias. Sur le linge s'était "imprimée" l'image du visage de Jésus.

Enfin, la forme ultime de ce développement précise qu'Ananias, voulait faire le portrait de Jésus, mais qu'il lui était impossible de fixer les traits du Sauveur, car son visage semblait changer sans cesse d'aspect, "sous l'effet de la grâce indicible qui s'en dégageait". Le Christ, devinant le dessein d'Ananie se fit apporter une petite bassine, s'y lava le visage et l'essuya avec un linge plié en quatre. Aussitôt ses traits se trouvèrent imprimés de manière indélébile sur ce linge, sans le secours d'une main humaine.

Saint Jean Damascène mentionne lui aussi brièvement l'épisode dans sa Défense de la foi orthodoxe (De fide IV. 16)

Ce fut le Mandylion [2] d'Édesse, réputée la "première" icône. Indépendamment de toute question d'historicité, le Mandylion (ou "Sainte Face") est aujourd'hui une icône du Christ et, selon la doctrine de l'Église orthodoxe, celui qui vénère une icône ne vénère pas la matière

(bois, peinture...) dont elle est faite — ou les légendes qui s'y sont attachées — mais celui qui y est représenté, en l'occurrence le Christ.

Le Mandylion et Abgar dans la liturgie

Comme le note l'iconographe Léonide Ouspensky,

"L'Église garde des traditions qui, par leur contenu, même exprimé sous une forme légendaire, servent à manifester et à affirmer les vérités dogmatiques de l'œuvre divine. (…) C'est pour cela que ces traditions, comme celle de l'image non faite de main d'homme et du roi Abgar, sont fixées dans les Actes des Conciles et dans les écrits patristiques, c'est pour cela qu'elles entrent dans la vie liturgique orthodoxe."

Ainsi, le 16 août est la fête de l'icône "non faite de main d'homme" dans l'Église orthodoxe, ainsi que dans l'Église copte.

D'autre part, Abgar est commémoré comme saint "Abgar, roi d'Édesse et premier roi chrétien" durant l'Avent de Noël par l'Église d'Arménie, et à la Mi-Carême par l'Église syrienne. [3]

S'il n'y eut pas de vénération de "saint Abgar" en Occident, l'histoire est toutefois connue par la "Légende Dorée" de Jacques de Voragine qui l'intègre dans la vie des apôtres Simon et Jude, en se basant sur Eusèbe et saint Jean Damascène.

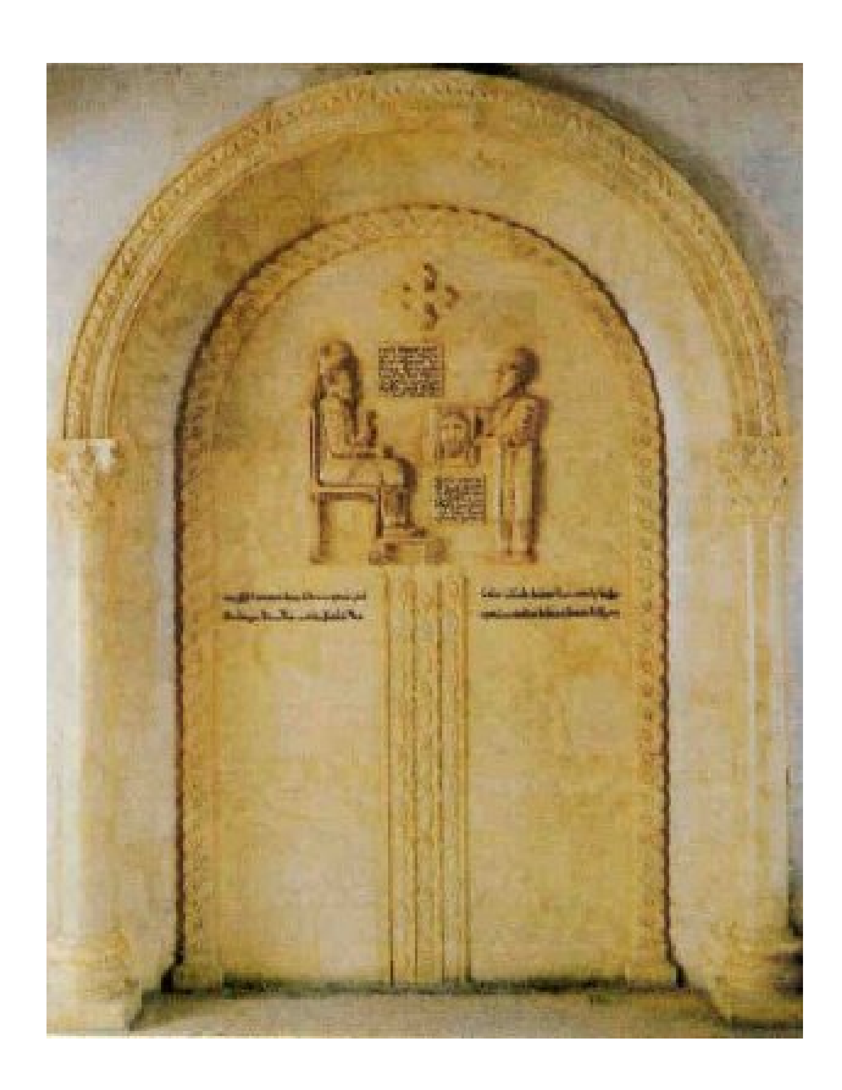
Abgar et Véronique

Tandis qu'en Orient, la légende d'Abgar allait en s'amplifiant, en Occident, elle prit une autre forme.
Selon les Acta Sanctorum publiés par les Bollandistes (pour le 4 février), il s'agit d'une femme pieuse de Jérusalem qui, poussée par la compassion lorsque Jésus-Christ portait sa croix au Golgotha, lui a donné son voile pour qu'il pût essuyer son front. Jésus accepta et, après s'en être servi, le lui rendit avec l'image de son visage qui s'y était miraculeusement imprimée. Aussi, l'iconographie occidentale représente traditionnellement Véronique tenant un tissu où s'est imprimé le visage de Jésus.

Le nom "Véronique" lui-même est une latinisation du prénom macédonien Bérénice (Βερενίκη) signifiant "qui porte la victoire". L'étymologie populaire a ensuite rapproché ce nom des mots latins "vera" "icon" : vraie image.
Eusèbe de Césarée raconte, dans son Histoire Ecclesiastique (VII 18) que la femme hémorroïsse que le Christ avait guérie (Matthieu 9:20) avait fait installer une statue du Sauveur à Césarée de Philippe. Il ne fallut pas longtemps à la légende pour donner un nom à cette femme. En Occident, elle a été identifiée avec Marthe de Béthanie, en Orient on l'a appelée Berenikè, ou Beronikè, nom qui apparaît déjà dans une œuvre comme les Acta Pilati, dont la forme la plus ancienne remonte au IVe siècle.

Notes
1. Le Décret de Gélase est un texte qui énonce les livres reconnus comme canoniques par l'Église de Rome, et ceux auxquels elle ne reconnaît pas cette canonicité. Ce Decretum Gelasianum est probablement du VIe siècle, donc nettement postérieur au pape Gélase.

2. Mandylion, de mindil, "mouchoir", "serviette" en syriaque.
3. Selon l'ouvrage d'Holweck, A Biographical Dictionary of the Saints publié en 1924, et cité dans le Wikipédia anglais, l'Église orthodoxe vénèrerait saint Abgar le 11 mai et le 28 octobre. On ne trouve cependant nulle trace d'une telle vénération dans "Le Synaxaire, vies des saints de l'Église orthodoxe en français", du moine Macaire de Simonos Petra (Mont Athos)(Editions To Perivoli tis Panaghias Thessalonique 1987-1996). D'autre part, selon la même source, l'Église syrienne le vénèrerait le 1er août.



Eusèbe de Césarée

Histoire Ecclésiastique Livre 1.13

Quant a l'histoire de Thaddée, en voici le récit La divinité de notre Seigneur et Sauveur Jésus Christ ayant été proclamée parmi tous les hommes, à cause de sa puissance thaumaturgique, amena de grandes multitudes d'entre eux, même des régions étrangères les plus éloignées de la Judée, avec l'espoir qu'ils seraient guéris des maladies et des souffrances de toutes sortes. Le roi Abgar qui régnait d'une manière très distinguée sur les nations d'au delà de l'Euphrate, était alors consumé par de terribles souffrances corporelles, incurables, du moins selon la puissance humaine. Lorsqu'il apprit le nom illustre de Jésus et ses miracles unanimement attestés par tous, il devint son suppliant et lui fit porter une lettre, pour lui demander la délivrance de son mal. Celui-ci n'obéit pas alors à son appel, mais il l'honora d'une lettre particulière, lui promettant d'envoyer un de ses disciples pour guérir sa maladie et pour le sauver avec tous ses sujets. La promesse fut accomplie pour le roi peu de temps après. En effet, après que Jésus fut ressuscité des morts et monté aux cieux, Thomas, un des douze Apôtres, envoya à Edesse par un mouvement divin, Thaddée qui était, lui aussi, compté au nombre des soixante-dix disciples du Christ, comme héraut et évangéliste de la doctrine sur le Christ : par lui toutes les promesses de notre Sauveur reçurent leur accomplissement. On a de cela le témoignage écrit, emprunté aux archives d'Edesse qui était alors une ville royale : c'est en effet dans les documents publics du pays, qui contiennent les actes anciens et ceux du temps d'Abgar, que l'on trouve cette histoire conservée depuis lors jusqu'à présent. Il n'y a rien de tel que de prendre connaissance des lettres elles-mêmes empruntées par nous aux archives et traduites littéralement du syriaque en ces termes.

Copie de la lettre écrite par le toparque Abgar à Jésus, et à lui envoyée par le courrier Ananias à Jérusalem.

" Abgar, fils d'Ouchamas, toparque, à Jésus bon Sauveur manifesté au pays de Jérusalem, Salut.

" J'ai entendu parler de toi et de tes guérisons, que tu accomplirais sans remèdes ni plantes. A ce qu'on dit, tu fais voir les aveugles et marcher les boiteux; tu purifies les lépreux ; tu chasses les esprits impurs et les démons, tu guéris ceux qui sont frappés de longues maladies, tu ressuscites les morts. Ayant entendu tout cela à ton sujet, je me suis mis dans l'esprit que de deux choses l'une : ou bien tu es Dieu, et, descendu du ciel, tu fais ces merveilles; ou tu es le fils de Dieu faisant ces merveilles. C'est pourquoi donc, je t'écris maintenant et je te demande de prendre la peine de venir à moi et de guérir l'infirmité que j'ai. Car j'ai encore appris que les Juifs murmurent contre toi et te veulent du mal. Ma ville est très petite, mais honorable et elle nous suffira à tous deux. "

Telle est la lettre écrite par Abgar qu'éclairait alors quelque peu la lumière divine. Il vaut la peine d'écouter la lettre que lui écrivit Jésus et qui lui fut apportée par le même courrier, courte sans doute mais pleine de sens : en voici également le texte :

Réponse de Jésus par le courrier Ananias au toparque Abgar.

" Heureux es-tu d'avoir cru en moi, sans m'avoir vu. Car il est écrit de moi que ceux qui m'ont vu ne croiront pas en moi, afin que ceux qui ne m'ont pas vu croient et vivent. Quant à ce que tu m'écris de venir à toi, il faut que j'accomplisse ici tout ce pour quoi j'ai été envoyé et qu'après l'avoir ainsi accompli, je retourne à celui qui m'a envoyé. Et lorsque j'aurai été élevé, je t'enverrai un de mes disciples pour te guérir de ton infirmité et te donner la vie, à toi et à ceux qui sont avec toi. "

A ces lettres était encore joint ceci, en langue syriaque : " Après l'ascension de Jésus, Judas, qu'on appelle aussi Thomas, envoya à Abgar l'apôtre Thaddée, un des soixante-dix. A son

arrivée, celui-ci demeura chez Tobie, fils de Tobie. Lorsqu'on entendit parler de lui, on signifia à Abgar qu'un apôtre de Jésus était là, selon qu'il l'avait promis. Thaddée avait donc commencé à guérir toute maladie et toute langueur par la puissance de Dieu, de sorte que tous en étaient étonnés. Et lorsque Abgar apprit les merveilles et les miracles qu'il faisait, les guérisons qu'il accomplissait, il lui vint à la pensée qu'il était celui dont Jésus lui avait écrit : Lorsque j'aurai été élevé, je t'enverrai un de mes disciples qui guérira tes souffrances. Il appela donc Tobie, chez qui demeurait l'apôtre, et lui dit : J'ai appris qu'un homme puissant est venu habiter dans ta maison. Amène-le moi. Tobie, revenu auprès de Thaddée, lui dit : le toparque Abgar, après m'avoir appelé, m'a dit de t'amener auprès de lui pour que tu le guérisses. Et Thaddée répliqua : J'irai, puisque je suis envoyé avec puissance auprès de lui.
" Le lendemain donc, au point du jour, Tobie prit avec lui Thaddée et vint près d'Abgar. Lorsqu'il entra, les principaux du pays étaient là, debout autour du toparque. Dès son arrivée, Abgar vit subitement un grand spectacle sur le visage de l'apôtre Thaddée; et à cette vue, Abgar adora Thaddée, ce qui étonna tous les assistants car ils n'avaient pas vu le spectacle qui s'était manifesté au seul Abgar. Celui-ci demanda à Thaddée : Es-tu en vérité disciple de Jésus, le fils de Dieu, qui m'a dit : Je t'enverrai un de mes disciples qui te guérira et te donnera la vie ? Thaddée dit : Puisque tu as cru fortement en celui qui m'a envoyé, c'est pour cela que j'ai été envoyé près de toi. Et maintenant si tu crois en lui, les demandes de ton cœur seront réalisées pour toi comme tu auras cru. Et Abgar lui répondit : J'ai cru en lui tellement que j'aurais voulu prendre une armée et détruire les Juifs qui l'ont crucifié, si je n'en avais pas été empêché par l'empire romain. Et Thaddée dit : Notre Seigneur a accompli la volonté de son Père; et, après l'avoir accomplie, il est retourné auprès du Père. Abgar lui dit : Et moi aussi j'ai cru en lui et en son Père. Et Thaddée dit : A cause de cela, j'étends la main sur toi en son nom. Lorsqu'il l'eut fait, aussitôt le roi fut guéri de sa maladie et des souffrances qu'il éprouvait. Abgar admira que, selon qu'il avait entendu dire de Jésus, de même il l'avait éprouvé en fait par le moyen de son disciple Thaddée : celui-ci l'avait guéri sans remèdes ni plantes; et non seulement lui, mais encore Abdos, fils d'Abdos, qui était podagre. Ce dernier lui aussi, étant venu, se jeta aux pieds de Thaddée, obtint ses prières et fut guéri par sa main. Thaddée guérit encore beaucoup d'autres de leurs concitoyens, fit de grands miracles et prêcha la parole de Dieu.
" Après cela, Abgar dit : Toi, Thaddée, tu fais cela avec la puissance de Dieu et nous-mêmes en sommes dans l'étonnement. Mais avec cela, je t'en supplie, renseigne-moi sur la venue de Jésus, comment elle s'est produite, et sur sa puissance, par quelle puissance il a fait tout ce que j'ai entendu dire. Et Thaddée répondit : Pour l'instant, je me tairai; mais puisque j'ai été envoyé pour prêcher la parole, assemble-moi demain tous tes concitoyens; je leur prêcherai et je sèmerai en eux la parole de la vie , sur la venue de Jésus, comment elle s'est produite, sur sa mission, pourquoi il a été envoyé par le Père; sur sa puissance, ses œuvres, les mystères qu'il a enseignés dans le monde : par quelle puissance il agissait ainsi; sur la nouveauté de son message, sa faiblesse, son humiliation : comment il s'est humilié lui-même, comment il a déposé et rapetissé sa divinité, comment il a été crucifié, est descendu aux enfers, a brisé la barrière qui n'avait jamais été brisée, a ressuscité les morts et, après être descendu seul, est remonté avec une grande multitude auprès de son Père. Abgar ordonna donc de rassembler dès l'aurore ses concitoyens pour entendre la prédication de Thaddée; et après cela, il ordonna qu'on lui donnât de l'or, en pièces et en lingots. Celui-ci refusa en disant : Si nous avons abandonné nos biens propres, comment accepterons-nous ceux des autres ? Cela se passa en l'an 340. "
Voilà ce qu'il ne m'a pas semblé inutile et inopportun de rapporter ici, et qui a été traduit littéralement du syriaque

Histoire de l'Arménie
Par Moïse de Khorène
Livre 2, chap 30 - 33

Oeuvre numérisée par Marc Szwajcer
http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/moise/table.htm



Ch. xxx.
Abgar envoie à Marinus des princes qui, à cette occasion, voient Jésus notre Sauveur, ce qui est le début de la conversion d'Abgar.

Vers ce temps-là, Marinus, fils de Storog (Eustorge), fut investi par l'empereur de la charge de commandant de la Phénicie, de la Palestine, de la Syrie et de la Mésopotamie. Abgar lui envoya deux de ses principaux officiers, Mar-Ikap,[159] prince d'Aghdznik, et Sampsicéramus (Schamschagrun), chef de la maison des Abahouni, ainsi qu'Ananus (Anan), son favori. Les envoyés se rendirent dans la ville de Bethkoubin pour faire connaître à Marinus les causes du voyage d'Abgar en Orient, en lui montrant le traité conclu entre Ardaschès et ses frères, et en même temps pour invoquer l'appui de Marinus. Ils rencontrèrent ce dernier à Eleuthéropolis. Marinus reçut avec courtoisie et distinction les députés, et fit cette réponse à Abgar : « Ne redoute rien de la part de l'empereur, pourvu que tu acquittes régulièrement le tribut. »

A leur retour, les députés allèrent à Jérusalem pour voir le Christ notre Sauveur, attirés par la renommée de ses miracles. Devenus eux-mêmes témoins oculaires de ses prodiges, ils en firent part à Abgar. Celui-ci, saisi d'admiration, crut vraiment que Jésus était le fils de Dieu, et dit: « Ces miracles ne sont pas d'un homme, mais d'un Dieu! Il n'est personne ici-bas qui ait le pouvoir de ressusciter les morts, si ce n'est Dieu! » Abgar souffrait, par tout le corps, de douleurs aiguës qu'il avait contractées en Perse, sept ans auparavant, et les hommes n'avaient pu apporter aucun soulagement à ses maux. Il fit porter une lettre suppliante à Jésus, le conjurant de venir le guérir de ses douleurs. Cette lettre était ainsi conçue:

Ch. xxxi.

Lettre d'Abgar au Sauveur Jésus-Christ.
« Abgar, fils d'Arscham, toparque (prince du pays), à Jésus, Sauveur et bienfaiteur [de l'humanité], qui as apparu dans le pays de Jérusalem, salut:
« J'ai entendu parler de toi et des guérisons opérées par tes mains, sans l'emploi des remèdes et des plantes. Car il est dit que tu fais que les aveugles voient, que les boiteux marchent et que les lépreux sont guéris. Tu chasses les malins esprits; tu guéris les malheureux affligés de longues maladies; enfin tu ressuscites les morts. Comme j'ai entendu parler de toutes ces merveilles opérées par toi, je n'hésite pas à croire, ou que tu es Dieu descendu du ciel pour faire de tels prodiges, ou bien le fils de Dieu, toi qui opères de si grandes choses. En conséquence je t'ai donc écrit, te suppliant de daigner venir vers moi afin de me guérir du mal qui me dévore. J'ai entendu dire aussi que les Juifs murmurent contre toi et veulent te livrer au supplice. Je possède une ville petite, mais [dont le séjour est] agréable; elle suffira à nous deux.
« Les porteurs de ce message rencontrèrent Jésus à Jérusalem, événement confirmé par les paroles de l'Evangile: « Quelques-uns d'entre les parents vinrent trouver Jésus; mais ceux qui les entendirent, n'osant rapporter à Jésus ce qu'ils avaient entendu, le dirent à Philippe et André qui racontaient tout à Jésus. »
Le Sauveur n'accepta pas alors l'invitation qui lui était adressée, mais il voulut bien honorer Abgar d'une réponse dont voici le sens:

Ch. xxxii.

Réponse à la lettre d'Abgar, écrite par l'apôtre Thomas, d'après l'ordre du Sauveur.

« Heureux celui qui croit en moi sans m'avoir vu! car il est écrit de moi: « Ceux qui me verront ne croiront point en moi; et ceux qui ne me voient point, croiront et vivront. Quant à ce que tu m'as écrit de venir près de toi, il me faut accomplir ici toutes les choses pour lesquelles j'ai été envoyé, et, lorsque j'aurai tout accompli, je monterai vers Celui qui m'a envoyé; et quand je m'en irai, j'enverrai un de mes disciples qui guérira tes maux, te donnera la vie, à toi et à tous ceux qui sont avec toi. »
Anan, courrier d'Abgar, lui apporta cette lettre, ainsi que l'image du Sauveur qui se trouve encore à présent à Edesse.

Ch. xxxiii.

Prédication de l'apôtre Thaddée à Édesse. — Copie de cinq lettres.

Après l'ascension de notre Sauveur, l'apôtre Thomas, l'un des douze, envoya un des soixante-dix disciples, Thaddée, dans la ville d'Edesse, pour guérir Abgar et évangéliser selon la parole du Seigneur. Thaddée se rendit dans la maison de Tobie, prince juif que l'on dit être de la race des Bagratides (Pakradouni). Ce Tobie, ayant été persécuté par[160] Arscham, n'abjura pas cependant avec ses autres parents le judaïsme, mais il en observa les lois jusqu'au moment où il crut au Christ. Bientôt le nom de Thaddée se répandit dans toute la ville. Abgar, en apprenant sa présence, dit: « C'est bien celui au sujet duquel Jésus m'a écrit », et il le manda aussitôt auprès de lui. Lorsque Thaddée entra, une apparition merveilleuse éclaira sa face aux yeux d'Abgar, qui se leva tout à coup de son trône, tomba la face contre terre et se prosterna devant l'apôtre. Tous les princes qui étaient présents furent saisis d'étonnement, car ils n'avaient point remarqué la vision. « Es-tu vraiment, dit Abgar, le disciple de Jésus à jamais béni, qu'il m'a promis de m'envoyer, et peux-tu me délivrer de mes maux? — Je le suis, dit Thaddée, si tu crois en Jésus-Christ, fils de Dieu, les vœux de ton cœur seront exaucés. — J'ai cru en lui, reprit Abgar, et en son Père; c'est pourquoi je voulais aller à la tête de mes troupes exterminer les Juifs qui ont crucifié Jésus, si je n'en eusse été empêché par la puissance romaine. »
Dès lors Thaddée se mit à évangéliser le roi et [les habitants de] sa ville; puis, imposant ses mains sur Abgar, il lui rendit la santé. Il guérit aussi un goutteux appelé Abdiou, patricien de la ville, très honoré dans la maison du roi. Il guérit encore tous les malades et les infirmes de

la ville, et tous eurent la foi. Abgar fut baptisé, et, avec lui, tous [les habitants] de la ville; les temples des faux dieux furent fermés, et les statues des idoles, [qui étaient placées] sur les autels et, les colonnes, furent dissimulées sous [d'épaisses nattes de] roseaux. Abgar ne contraignait personne par la force à embrasser la foi; mais de jour en jour le nombre des croyants augmentait.

L'apôtre Thaddée baptisa un fabricant de tiares de soie, appelé Addée, le consacra, l'établit à Edesse et le laissa au roi à sa place. Ensuite, ayant reçu un édit du roi, qui exigeait que tous écoutassent l'Evangile du Christ, Thaddée s'en alla trouver Sanadroug, neveu (fils de la sœur) d'Abgar, que ce prince avait établi comme chef du pays et de l'année.

Abgar se plut à écrire à l'empereur Tibère la lettre suivante:

Lettre d'Abgar à Tibère.

« Abgar, roi des Arméniens, à son seigneur Tibère, empereur des Romains, salut.

Je sais que rien n'est ignoré de ta majesté; mais, comme ton ami, je te ferai encore mieux connaître les faits par écrit. Les Juifs qui habitent dans les cantons de la Palestine ont crucifié Jésus, sans péché, après tant de bienfaits, tant de prodiges, tant de miracles opérés en leur faveur jusqu'à ressusciter les morts. Crois-le bien, ce ne sont pas là des effets de la puissance d'un simple mortel, mais ce sont [des manifestations] divines, au moment où ils l'ont mis en croix, le soleil s'obscurcit, la terre fut ébranlée jusque dans ses fondements. Jésus lui-même, le troisième jour, ressuscita d'entre les morts et apparut à plusieurs [personnes]. Aujourd'hui, en tous lieux, son nom, invoqué par ses disciples, produit les plus grands miracles. Ce qui m'est arrivé, à moi-même, en est la preuve manifeste. Ta majesté sait donc ce qu'elle doit ordonner à l'égard du peuple juif qui a commis ce forfait; elle sait si elle doit publier partout l'univers l'ordre d'adorer le Christ comme le Dieu véritable. Sois en santé. »

Réponse de Tibère à la lettre d'Abgar.

« Tibère, empereur des Romains, à Abgar, roi des Arméniens, salut.

On a lu devant moi ta lettre amicale, et on t'adresse de ma part des remerciements. Quoique nous ayons déjà entendu raconter ces faits par plusieurs, Pilate, de son côté, nous a officiellement informé des miracles opérés par Jésus. C'est ainsi qu'étant ressuscité d'entre les morts, plusieurs l'ont reconnu pour être Dieu. En conséquence, j'ai voulu moi aussi faire ce que tu proposes; mais, comme il est d'usage chez les Romains de ne pas admettre un Dieu [nouveau] sur l'ordre du souverain seulement, tant que le sénat ne s'est pas réuni pour discuter l'affaire, j'ai donc dû proposer l'admission de ce Dieu au sénat qui l'a rejeté avec mépris parce qu'elle n'avait pas été examinée d'abord par lui. Toutefois nous avons donné ordre à tous ceux à qui cela conviendra de recevoir Jésus parmi les dieux; et nous avons menacé de mort quiconque parlera en mal des chrétiens.[161] Quant aux Juifs qui ont osé crucifier Jésus, qui, ainsi que je l'ai appris, ne méritait ni la croix, ni la mort, mais était digne d'être honoré et adoré, j'examinerai l'affaire quand j'aurai apaisé la révolte des Hispaniens,[162] et je traiterai ces Juifs selon leur mérite. »

Abgar écrit encore une lettre à Tibère.

« Abgar, roi des Arméniens, à son seigneur Tibère, empereur des Romains, salut.

J'ai reçu la lettre écrite de la part de ta majesté, et je me suis réjoui des ordres émanés de ta sagesse. Si tu le permets, mon avis est que la conduite du sénat est ridicule; car, selon la raison, c'est d'après le jugement des hommes que se confère la divinité. Ainsi donc, si Dieu ne convient pas à l'homme, il ne peut être Dieu, car il faut de toute nécessité que Dieu soit accepté par l'homme.[163] Donc, mon seigneur pensera qu'il est juste d'envoyer un autre gouverneur à Jérusalem, en place de Pilate qui doit être chassé avec ignominie de l'emploi élevé où tu l'avais appelé; car il s fait la volonté des Juifs et crucifié le Christ injustement et sans ton ordre. Je souhaite que tu conserves la santé. »

Abgar, ayant écrit cette lettre, en déposa la copie avec celle des autres dans les archives, il écrivit ensuite au jeune Nersès (Nersèh), roi d'Assyrie, à Babylone (sic).

Lettre d'Abgar à Nersès.

« Abgar, roi des Arméniens, à mou fils Nersès, salut.

J'ai reçu ta lettre; j'ai brisé les fers de Bérose et je lui ai remis ses offenses. Si cela te convient, nomme-le gouverneur de Ninive. Quant à ce que tu m'écris de t'envoyer ce médecin qui fait des miracles et prêche un autre Dieu supérieur au Feu et à l'Eau, afin que tu puisses le voir et l'entendre, [sache que] ce n'est point un médecin selon l'art des hommes, mais qu'il est un disciple du fils de Dieu, Créateur du feu et de l'eau, et destiné à venir [évangéliser] les contrées de l'Arménie. Toutefois un de ses principaux compagnons, appelé Simon,[164] est envoyé dans les contrées de la Perse. Cherche-le et tu l'entendras, toi, ainsi que ton père Ardaschès. Il périra tous vos maux, et vous conduira dans le chemin de la vie. » Abgar écrit encore à Ardaschès, roi de Perse, la lettre suivante:

Lettre d'Abgar à Ardaschès.

« Abgar, roi des Arméniens, à Ardaschès, mon frère, roi des Perses,[165] salut.

Je sais que tu as entendu parler de Jésus-Christ, fils de Dieu, que les juifs ont crucifié, qui est ressuscité d'entre les morts et qui a envoyé ses disciples par tout l'univers pour instruire les hommes. L'un de ses principaux disciples, nommé Simon, se trouve dans les États de ta majesté. Cherche-le, tu le trouveras; il vous guérira de toutes vos maladies, il vous conduira dans le chemin de la vie, et tu croiras à ses paroles, toi, tes frères et tous ceux qui sont soumis à ton autorité. Il m'est bien doux de penser que mes parents, selon la chair, seront aussi mes parents et mes amis selon l'esprit. »

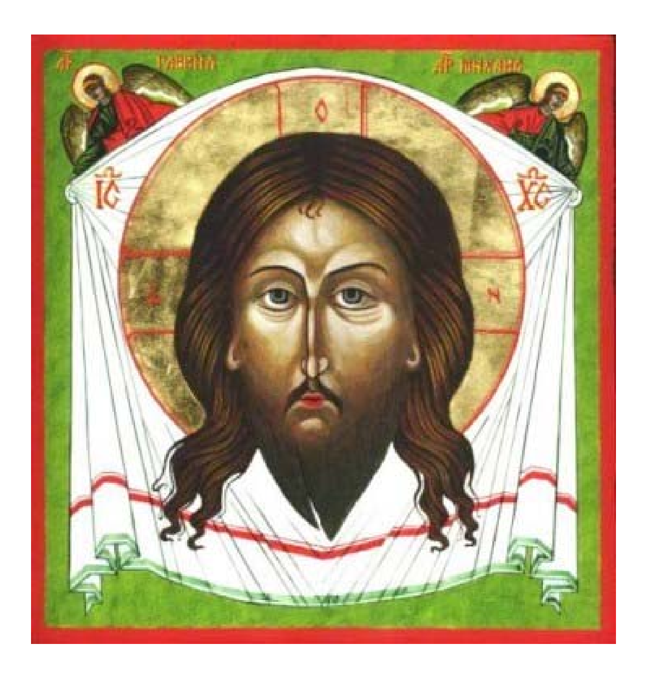
Abgar n'avait pas encore reçu la réponse à ces lettres, lorsqu'il mourut après trente-huit ans de règne.[166]

The doctrine of Addai,[1] the apostle.

English Translation (1876).

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http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/addai_2_text.htm



THE letter of king Abgar,[2] the son of king Ma'nu, and at what time he sent it to our Lord at Jerusalem; and at what time Addai the Apostle came to him (Abgar) at Edessa;[3] and what he spake in the gospel of his preaching; and what he said and commanded, when he went forth from, this world, to those who had received from him the hand of the priesthood.

In the three hundred and forty and third year of the kingdom of the Greeks,[4] and in the reign of our lord Tiberius, the Roman Emperor, and in the reign of king Abgar, son of king Ma'nu, in the month of October, on the twelfth day, Abgar Ukkama sent Marihab and Shamshagram,[5] chiefs and honoured persons of his kingdom, |2 and Hannan[6] the tabularius, the sharrir, with them, to the city which is called Eleutheropolis, but in Aramaic Beth-gubrin,[7] to the honoured Sabinus, the son of Eustorgius, the deputy of our lord the emperor, who ruled over Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, and the whole country of Mesopotamia. They brought him letters concerning the affairs of the kingdom; and when they went to him, he received them with joy and honour, and they were with him twenty and five days. He wrote for them a reply[8] to the letters, and sent them to Abgar the king. When they went forth from him, they set out and came on the way towards Jerusalem; and they saw many men, who came from a distance to see Christ, because the fame of his wonderful deeds had gone forth to remote countries. When Marihab, Shamshagram, and Hannan, the keeper of the archives, saw the men, they also came with them to Jerusalem. When they entered |3 Jerusalem, they saw Christ, and they rejoiced with the multitudes, who were joined to Him. But they saw also the Jews, who were standing in groups, and were considering what they should do to Him; for they were disturbed to see that a multitude of their people confessed Him. And they were there in Jerusalem ten days, and Hannan, the keeper of the archives, wrote down everything which he saw that Christ did; also the rest of that done by Him, before they went thither. And they departed and came to Edessa, and entered into the presence of Abgar the king, their lord, who had sent them, and they gave him the reply of the letters, which they had brought with them. After the letters were read, they began to recount before the king all which they had seen and all which Christ had done in Jerusalem. And Hannan, the keeper of the archives,

read before him all which he had written and brought with him; and when Abgar the king heard, he was astonished and wondered, as also his princes, who stood before him. Abgar said to them: These mighty works are not of men, but of God; because there is not any one who can make the dead alive, but God only. And Abgar wished himself to pass over and go to Palestine, and see with his own eyes all which Christ was doing; but because he was not able to pass through the country of the Romans, which was not his, lest this cause should call forth bitter enmity, he wrote a letter and sent it to Christ by the hand of Hannan, the keeper of the archives. He went forth from Edessa on the fourteenth day of Adar,[9] and entered Jerusalem on the twelfth day of Nisan,[10] on the fourth day of the week (Wednesday). And he found Christ at the house of |4 Gamaliel, the chief priest[11] of the Jews. The letter was read before Him, which was written thus:----"Abgar Ukkama, to Jesus, the Good Physician, who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem. My Lord: Peace. I have heard of Thee and of Thy healing, that it is not by medicines and roots Thou healest, but by Thy word Thou openest the eyes of the blind, Thou makest the lame to walk, cleansest the lepers, and makest the deaf to hear. And unclean spirits[12] and lunatics, and those tormented, them Thou healest by Thy word; Thou also raisest the dead. And when I heard of these great wonders which Thou doest, I decided in my mind that either Thou art God, who hast come down from heaven and doest these things, or Thou art the Son of God, who doest all these things. Therefore, I have written to request of Thee to come to me who adore Thee, and to heal the disease which I have, as I believe in Thee. This also I have heard, that the Jews murmur against Thee and persecute Thee, and even seek to crucify Thee, and contemplate treating Thee cruelly. I possess one small and beautiful city, and it is sufficient for both to dwell in it in quietness."
When Jesus received the letter at the house of the chief priest of the Jews, He said to Hannan, the keeper of the archives: "Go and say to thy lord, who hath sent thee to Me, 'Blessed art thou, who, although thou hast not seen Me, believest in Me, for it is written of Me, Those who see Me will not believe in Me, and those who see Me not, will believe in me.[13] But as to that which |5 thou hast written to Me, that I should come to thee, that for which I was sent here is now finished, and I am going up to my Father, who sent me, and when I have gone up to Him, I will send to thee one of my disciples, who will cure the disease which thou hast, and restore thee to health; and all who are with thee he will convert to everlasting life. Thy city shall be blessed, and no enemy shall again become master of it for ever.'"
When Hannan, the keeper of the archives, saw that Jesus spake thus to him, by virtue of being the king's painter, he took and painted a likeness of Jesus with choice paints, and brought with him to Abgar the king, his master. And when Abgar the king saw the likeness, he received it with great joy, and placed it with great honour in one of his palatial houses. Hannan, the keeper of the archives, related to him everything which he had heard from Jesus, as His words were put by him in writing. After that Christ had ascended to heaven, Judas Thomas[14] sent to Abgar, Addai the Apostle, who was one of the seventy-two Apostles. And when Addai came to the city of Edessa, he dwelt at the house of |6 Tobias,[15] son of Tobias the Jew, who was of Palestine. Through all the city a report was heard of him, and one of the nobles of Abgar whose name was Abdu,[16] the son of Abdu, one of those who sat with bended knees [17] before Abgar, went and said concerning Addai: behold, a messenger has come, and dwells here, he of whom Jesus sent to thee, "I send to Thee one of my disciples." And when Abgar heard these words, and the mighty acts which Addai did, and the wonderful cures which he effected, he thought for certain in his mind: Truly this is he whom Jesus sent, saying, "When I have ascended to heaven I will send to thee one of my disciples, and he will cure thy disease." And Abgar sent and called for Tobias, and said to him, I have heard that a certain powerful man has come, and dwells in thy house. Bring him up to me; a good hope of recovery through him has been found for me. Tobias went early on the next day and took Addai the Apostle, and brought him up to Abgar, Addai himself knowing that by the power of God he was sent to

him. And when Addai came up and went to Abgar, his nobles standing with him, and in going towards him, a wonderful vision was seen by Abgar in the face of Addai. At the moment that Abgar saw the vision, he fell down and worshipped Addai. Great astonishment seized all those who were standing before him, for they saw not the vision which |7 was seen by Abgar. Then Abgar said to Addai, "Of a truth thou art the disciple of Jesus, that mighty one, the son of God, who sent to me saying I send thee one of my disciples for healing and for life." Addai said to him, "Because that from the beginning thou didst believe in Him who sent me to thee, therefore have I been sent to thee, and if thou believest in Him, everything in which thou dost believe thou shalt have." Abgar said to him, "So have I believed in Him, that with respect to those Jews who crucified Him, I desire to take with me an army, and to go and destroy them; but because the kingdom belongs to the Romans, I was restrained by the covenant of peace, which was confirmed by me with our lord the emperor Tiberius, like my forefathers." Addai said to him, "Our Lord has fulfilled the will of His Father. And when He had completed the will of His Parent, He was taken up to His Father, and sat with Him in glory, with whom he was from eternity." Abgar said to him: "I also believe in Him and in His Father." Addai said to him:[18] "Because that thou so believest, I place my hand on thee, in the name of Him in whom thou believest."

At the moment that he placed his hand upon him, he was cured of the plague of the disease, which he had had for a long time.[19] Abgar wondered and was astonished, |8 that as it was reported to him concerning Jesus, that which He did and cured; so also Addai himself, without medicine of any kind, healed in the name of Jesus. And also with respect to Abdu, the son of Abdu, he had the gout in his feet, and he too brought his feet near him, and he (Addai) placed his hand upon them and healed him; and he had not the gout again. And also in all the city he wrought great cures, and showed wonderful mighty works in it. Abgar said to him: "Now that every man knoweth that by the power of Jesus Christ thou doest these wonderful works, and behold we are wondering at thy works, I require therefore of thee, that thou wouldest recount to us concerning the coining of Christ, how it was, and concerning His glorious power, and concerning those miracles which we have heard that He did, which thou hast seen with the rest of thy companions." Addai said to him: "I will not keep silent from declaring this; for because of this I was sent here to speak and to teach every one, who, like thee, is willing to believe. Tomorrow assemble for me all the city, that I may sow in it the Word of Life, by the preaching which I will preach before you concerning the coming of Christ, how it was, and concerning His glorious power, and concerning Him that sent Him, for what and how He sent Him, and concerning His power and His wonderful works, and concerning the glorious mysteries of His coming, which He spake in the world, and concerning the certitude of His preaching, how and for what He abased Himself, and humbled His exalted |9 divinity by the body, which He took, and was crucified and descended to the house of the dead, and cleaved the wall of partition, which had never been cleft, and gave life to the dead by being Himself slain, and descended by Himself, and ascended with many to His glorious Father, with whom He was from, eternity in one exalted divinity. And Abgar commanded that they should deliver to Addai silver and gold. Addai said to him: "How are we able to receive anything which is not ours? for, behold, that which was ours we have forsaken, as we were commanded by our Lord to be without purses and without scrips, and carrying crosses upon our shoulders, we were commanded to preach His Gospel to the whole creation: the whole creation felt and suffered by His crucifixion, which was for us, for the salvation of all men. And he narrated before Abgar the king, and before his princes and his nobles, and before Augustina, the mother of Abgar, and before Shalmath, the daughter of Meherdath, the wife of Abgar,[20] the signs of our Lord and His wonders, and the glorious miracles which He wrought, and His divine triumphs, and His ascension to His Father; and how they received powers and authorities at the time that He ascended, by which same power he had healed Abgar and

Abdu, the son of Abdu, the second person of his kingdom; and how he made them know that which would be revealed at the end of times, and in the consummation of all creatures, and the resuscitation and resurrection, which is about to be for all men, and the separation which is to be between the sheep and |10 the goats, and between the faithful and the unbelieving. And he said to them: "Because that the gate of life is strait and the way of truth is narrow, therefore few are the believers of truth, and in the power of unbelief is Satan's recreation. Because of this there are many liars, who cause to err those who look on. For except that there is a good end for faithful men, our Lord had not descended from heaven, and come to the birth, and to the suffering of death, and also He had not sent us[21] to be His preachers and evangelists. Those things which we saw and heard from Him, which He did and taught, we confidently preach before all men; for we would not do any wrong with respect to the truth of His Gospel. And not these things only; but also those which were done in His Name, after His ascension, we show and preach.

I will tell before you that which happened and was done in the presence of men, who, as you, believed in Christ, that He is the Son of the living God. Protonice, the wife of the Emperor Claudius,[22] whom Tiberius made second[23] in his kingdom, when he went to make war with the Spaniards, who had rebelled against him, this woman, when Simon, one of the disciples, was in the city of Rome, and she saw the signs and wonders, and |11 marvellous works which he did in the name of Christ; denied the paganism of her fathers in which she was brought up, and the idolatrous images which she had worshipped; and she believed in Christ our Lord, and worshipped Him, and praised with those who were joined unto Simon, and held Him in great honour. After this she wished also to see Jerusalem, and those places in which the mighty works of our Lord were done. So she arose promptly and descended from Rome to Jerusalem, she[24] and her two sons with her, and her one virgin daughter.

When she was entering Jerusalem, the city went forth to meet her, and they received her with great honour, as that which is due to the queen, the mistress of the great country of the Romans. But James, who was made director and ruler in the church which was built for us there, when he had heard for what purpose she had gone there, arose and went to her. And he entered into her presence where she was dwelling, in the royal great palace of king Herod. When she saw him, she received him with great joy, as also she had Simon Peter. He also showed her cures and mighty works as did Simon, and she said to him: "Show me Golgotha, on which Christ was crucified, and the wood of His cross on which He was suspended by the Jews, and the grave in which |12 He was placed." James said to her: "These three things which thy Majesty wishes to see are under the control of the Jews. They possess them, and permit us not to go to pray there before Golgotha and the grave, and neither the wood of His cross will they give us. And not only this, but they also severely persecute us, that we may not publish and preach in the name of Christ, and many times also they bind us in prison." When she heard these things, the queen immediately commanded, and they brought before her Onias, the son of Hannan the priest, and Gedalia, son of Caiaphas, and Judah the son of Ebed Shalom, chiefs and rulers of the Jews. And she said to them: "Deliver up Golgotha, and the grave, and the wood of the cross, to James, and those who agree with him, and let no man forbid them to minister there according to the custom of their ministry." And when she had so commanded the priests, she arose to go and see these places, and she also delivered that place to James, and those who were with him. Afterwards she entered the grave, and found in the grave three crosses, one of our Lord, and two of those robbers, who were crucified with Him, on His right hand and on His left. And at the time that she entered into the grave----she and her children with her----at that instant her virgin daughter fell down and died, without pain, without disease, and without any cause of death. And when the queen saw that her daughter had died suddenly, she kneeled and prayed within the grave, and said in her prayer: "God, who gave Himself to death for all men, and was crucified in this place, and was laid in this

grave; and as God, who keepeth alive all, has risen, and made many to rise with Him, lest the Jews, the crucifiers, should hear----and also the erring heathens, whose |13 idols and graven images, and the terrors of paganism, I have denied----and they see me, deride me, and say that all this which has happened to her is because that she denied the gods, which she did worship, and confessed Christ, whom she knew not, and went to honour the place of His grave and His crucifixion; and if, O my Lord, I am not worthy to be heard, because that I have worshipped creatures instead of Thee; spare Thou, for the sake of Thy adorable Name, that it may not be blasphemed in this place, as they blasphemed Thee at Thy crucifixion." She said these things in her prayer, and, in the excitement of her supplication, she repeated them before all those who were there. Her eldest son approached her, and said to her: "Hear that which I shall say before thy Majesty. I think thus in my mind and in my thought, that this death of this my sister, which was sudden, was not for nought; but this is a wonderful work, in which God will be praised, and not that His Name will be blasphemed, as those thought, who heard it. Behold, we enter the grave and find in it three crosses, and we know not which of them is the cross on which Christ was suspended. In the death of this my sister, we may be able to see and to learn which is the cross of Christ, for Christ is not neglectful of those who believe in Him, and seek Him." And the queen Protonice----her soul was very sad at this time----saw in her mind that her son spake these things wisely, justly and rightly. And with her hands she took hold of one of the crosses and placed it upon the dead body of her daughter, which lay before her, and she said in her prayer: "O God, who hast shown wonderful works in this place, as we hear and believe, if this cross, O Lord, be Thine, and on it Thy humanity was suspended by the insolent, show the strong |14 and mighty power of Thy divinity, which dwells in the humanity, and restore to life this my daughter, that she may arise, and Thy Name be glorified in her. May her soul return to her body, that Thy crucifiers may be confounded and Thy worshippers may rejoice! And she waited a long time after she had spoken thus. Afterwards she took that cross from the dead body of her daughter, and placed another, and also said in her prayer:

"O God, by whose nod worlds and creatures endure, and wishing the life of all men that they may be turned to Him, and is not neglectful of the petition of those who seek Him, if this cross be Thine, O Lord, show the power of Thy triumphs as Thou art accustomed, and restore to life this my daughter, that she may arise, and the heathens, worshipping Thy creatures instead of Thee, may be confounded, and the faithful and the true may confess, that their mouth may be opened to Thy praise before those who deny Thee!" And she waited a long time after these things, and took the second cross from her daughter; and she took the third cross and placed it upon her daughter. And as she was going to lift up her eyes to heaven, and to open her mouth in prayer, at that moment, at that time, in the twinkling of an eye, that, the cross touched the dead body of her daughter, her daughter became alive, and she arose suddenly, and praised God, who had restored her to life by His cross. But the queen Protonice, when she saw how her daughter became alive, trembled, and was greatly alarmed, but though alarmed she glorified Christ, and believed in Him, that He was the Son of the living God. Her son said to her: "My lady, thou seest that if this had not occurred today, it might have happened that they would have left this cross of Christ, by which my |15 sister became alive, and have taken and honoured that of one of those murderous thieves. Now, behold, we see and rejoice, and Christ, who has done this thing, is glorified in her."25 And she took the cross of Christ, and gave it to James, that it might be kept with great honour. She also commanded that a great and splendid building should be erected over Golgotha, on which He was crucified, and over the grave in which He was placed, so that these places might be honoured; and that there should be there a place of assembly for prayer, and a gathering for service.

But the queen, when she saw the whole population of the city, which she had collected for the sight of this work, she commanded that, without the covering of honour worn by queens, her

daughter should go with her unveiled to the palace of the king, in which she dwelt, so that every one might see her and praise God. But the people of the Jews and the Gentiles, who rejoiced at the beginning of this occurrence, and were glad, became very sad at the end of it. For they would have been well pleased if this had not occurred, for they saw on account of this many believed in Christ; and especially when they saw that the miracles, which were done in His Name after His ascension, were many more than those which were done before His ascension. And the fame of this deed which was done went forth to |16 distant countries, and also to the Apostles, my companions, who preached Christ. And there was rest in the churches of Jerusalem, and the cities round about it; and those who saw not this deed, with those who did see it, praised God. And when the queen went up from Jerusalem to the city of Rome, every city which she entered pressed to see the sight of her daughter. And when she had entered Eome, she recounted before the Emperor Claudius those things which had happened; and when the Emperor heard, he commanded that all the Jews should go forth from the country of Italy. In all that country this deed was spoken of by many, and also before Simon Peter this was recounted, which was done. "Whatsoever also the Apostles, companions, did, we preach before every man, that those who do not know may likewise hear those things which, by our hand, Christ did openly, that our Lord might be glorified by every man. These things which I repeat before you are told, that ye may know and understand how great is the faith of Christ among those who truly join themselves to Him.

But James, the director of the Church of Jerusalem, who with his own eyes saw the deed, gave a written account, and sent it to the Apostles, my companions, in the cities of their countries. And also the Apostles themselves gave written accounts, and made known to James whatsoever that Christ had done by their hands, and these were read before all the multitude of the people of the church.

But when Abgar the king heard these things, he and Augustina, his mother, and Shalmath, the daughter of Meherdath, and Paqûr26 and Abdshemesh, and |17 Shamshagram, and Abdu, and Azzai and Bar-kalba, with the rest of their companions, rejoiced exceedingly, and all of them glorified God, and made their confession in Christ. Abgar the king said to Addai: "I wish that everything which we have heard from thee today, and the rest also of the other things, thou wouldst tell openly before all the city, that every man may hear the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, which thou teachest to us, that he may rest and be confirmed in the doctrine which thou teachest to us, that many may understand that I believed rightly in Christ, in the Letter which I sent to Him, and may know that He is God, the Son of God, and thou art His true and faithful disciple, and that thou showest by works His glorious power before those who wish to believe in Him. The day after, Abgar commanded Abdu, the son of Abdu, who was healed of a sore disease of his feet, to send a herald, that he may proclaim in all the city that the whole population may be assembled, men and women, at the place which is called Beththabara, the wide space of the house of Avida,27 the son of Abd-nachad, that they might hear the doctrine of Addai the Apostle, and how he taught, and in the name of whom he cured, and by what power he wrought these miracles, and those wonders he did. For when he healed Abgar the king, it was the nobles only who stood before him, and saw him, when he healed him by the word of Christ, whom many physicians were not able to heal, but a stranger cured him by the faith of Christ.

And when all the city were assembled, men and women, as the king had commanded, Avida and Labbu, and |18 Chaphsai, and Bar-Kalba, and Labubna,28 and Chesrun,29 and Shamshagram stood there, with their companions, who as they were princes and nobles of the king, and commanders, and all the workmen and the artisans and the Jews and Gentiles who were in this city, and strangers of the countries of Soba and Harran, and the rest of the inhabitants of all this country of Mesopotamia, all of them stood to hear the doctrine of Addai; concerning whom they had heard; that he was the disciple of Jesus, who was crucified in

Jerusalem, and he effected cures in His name. And Addai began to speak to them thus: "Hear, all of you, and understand that which I speak before you; that I am not a physician of medicines and roots, of the art of the sons of men; but I am the disciple of Jesus Christ, the Physician of troubled souls, and the Saviour of future life, the Son of God, who came down from heaven, and was clothed with a body and became man; and He gave Himself and was crucified for all men. And when He was suspended on the wood, the sun He made dark in the firmament; and when He had entered the grave, He arose and went forth from the grave with many. And those who guarded the grave saw not how He went forth from the grave; but the angels of heaven |19 were the preachers and publishers of His resurrection, who if He had not wished, had not died, because that He is the Lord of death, the exit of all things.[30] And except it had pleased Him,He had not again clothed Himself with a body, for He is Himself the framer of the body. For the will which inclined Him to the birth from a virgin, also made Him condescend to the suffering of death, and He humbled the majesty of His exalted divinity, [31] who was with His Father from eternity, He of whom Prophets of old spake in their mysteries; and they represented images of His birth, and His suffering, and His resurrection, and His ascension to His Father, and of His sitting at the right hand. And, behold, He is worshipped by celestial spirits, and by the inhabitants of the earth, He who is worshipped from eternity. For although His was the appearance of men, His might, and His knowledge, and His power were of God Himself; as He said to us, [32] Behold, now is the son of man glorified, and God glorifies Himself in Him, by miracles and by wonders, and by honour of being at the right hand. But His body is the pure vestment of His glorious divinity, by which we are able to see His invisible Lordship. This Jesus Christ, therefore, we preach and publish, and, with Him, we praise His Father, and we extol and worship the Spirit of His |20 divinity, because that we were thus commanded by Him, to baptize and absolve those who believe in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Also the Prophets of old spake thus: that 'The Lord our God and His Spirit hath sent us.'[33] And if I speak anything which is not written in the Prophets, the Jews, who are standing among you and hear me, will not receive it; and if, again, I make mention of the name of Christ over those who have sufferings and diseases, and they are not healed by this glorious name, they, worshipping the work of their hands, will not believe. If now these things be written, which we say, in the Books of the Prophets,[34] and we are able to show the healing powers upon the sick, not a man will look on us without discerning the faith[35] which we preach, that God was crucified for all men. If there be those who do not wish to acquiesce in these words, let them draw near to us, and reveal to us what is their mind, that as a disease of their mind we may apply healing medicine for the cure of their wound. For although ye were not present at the time of the suffering of Christ, yet because of the sun, which was dark, and ye saw it, learn and understand concerning the great hororr there was at the time of the crucifixion of |21 Him whose Gospel has flown over all the earth, by the miracles which His disciples, my companions, are working in all the earth. And those who were Hebrews, and knew only the Hebrew tongue in which they were born, behold to day speak in all languages, that those who are far off, as those who are nigh, might hear and believe that He is the same, who confounded[36] the tongues of the impious in this district, which lies before us; He it is who to day teaches through us the faith of truth and verity, by humble and wretched men, who were from Galilee of Palestine. For I also, whom ye see, am from Paneas,[37] from where the river Jordan goes forth. And I was chosen, with my companions, to be a preacher[38] of this Gospel, by which, behold, the regions everywhere resound with the glorious name of the adorable Christ. Let, therefore, no man of you harden his heart against the truth and keep his mind at a distance from verity. Be ye not led captive after thoughts destructively erroneous, which are full of the despair of a bitter death.[39] Be ye not taken by the evil customs of the paganism of your fathers, and so keep yourselves at a distance from the life of truth and verity, which are in Christ. For those who believe in Him

are those who are trusted before Him, who descended to us by His favour, to make to cease from the earth the sacrifices of heathenism, and the offerings |22 of idolatry; that creatures should no longer be worshipped; but we should worship Him and His Father, with His Holy Spirit.[40] For I, as my Lord commanded me, behold, I preach and I publish. And His silver on the table, behold I cast before you, and the seed of His word I sow in the ears of every man. Those who wish to receive, theirs is the good reward of confession; and those who do not obey, against them I scatter the dust of my feet, as my Lord commanded me. Turn ye, therefore, my beloved, from evil ways and from hateful deeds, and turn yourselves to Him with a good and honest will, as He turned Himself to you with His grace and His rich mercies. And be ye not as the generations of old, which are passed, who, because that they hardened their heart against the fear of God, received punishment openly; that they may be chastised, and those who came after them may tremble and fear. For that for which our Lord came into the world was altogether[41] to teach and show that at the end of created things is a resurrection for all men. And at that time their acts of conduct will be represented on their own persons, and their bodies become volumes for the written things of justice, and there will not be he who knoweth not writing; because that every man shall read the letters of his own book[42] at that day, and the account of his actions he taketh with the fingers of his hands. Thus the unlettered will know the new writing of the new language, and there is not he who will say to his fellow, Read me this, because that one doctrine and one instruction shall reign over all men. |23

Let this thought, therefore, be represented before your eyes, and let it not pass from your mind, because that if it pass from your mind, it passeth not from Justice.[43] Seek mercies from God, that He may pardon the hateful infidelity of your paganism, for ye have forsaken Him who created you upon the face of the earth, and makes His rain to descend and His sun to rise upon you, and ye worship, instead of Him, His works. For the idols and graven images of paganism, and whatsoever of the creation in which ye have confidence and which ye worship, if there were in them feeling and understanding, for the sake of which ye worship and honour them, it would be right for them, which ye have engraven and established, and have firmly fixed with nails that they be not shaken, to receive your favour. For if the creatures were aware of your honours to them, they would cry, shouting to you, not to worship your fellows, which like yourselves are made and created; because that creatures made should not be worshipped; but that they should worship their Creator, and they should glorify Him who created them. And as His grace covers the wicked here,[44] so His justice shall be avenged on the infidels there. For I saw in this city that it abounded greatly in paganism, which is against God. Who is this Nebo,[45] an idol made which ye worship, |24 and Bel,[46] which ye honour? Behold, there are those among you who adore Bath Nical,[47] as the inhabitants of Harran your neighbours, and Taratha,[48] as the people of Mabug, and the eagle, as the Arabians, also the sun and the moon,as the rest of the inhabitants of Harran, who are as yourselves. |25 Be ye not led away captive by the rays of the luminaries and the bright star; for every one who worships creatures is cursed before God. For although there are among creatures such as are greater than their companions, yet they are fellow-servants of their companions, as I have said to you. For this is a bitter pain, for which there is not a cure, that things made should worship things made, and creatures should glorify their fellows. For as they are not able to stand by the power of themselves, but by the power of Him who created them, so they are not able to be worshipped with Him, nor to be honoured with Him; for it is a blasphemy against both parties, against the creatures when they are worshipped, and against the Creator, when the creatures, who are strangers to the nature of His existence, are made partakers with Him. For all the prophecy of the Prophets, and the preaching of us who are after the Prophets, is this, that creatures should not be worshipped with the Creator, and that men should not bind themselves to the yoke of corrupt paganism. It is not because of the creatures being seen, I

say, that they should not be worshipped; but everything which is made is a creature, whether visible or invisible. This is a horrible wickedness, to place the glorious name of divinity upon it. For not creatures, as you, we proclaim and worship; but the Lord of creatures. The earthquake, which made them tremble at the Cross, testifies that everything which is made depends on and exists by the power of its Maker, who was before worlds and creatures, whose nature is incomprehensible, in that His nature is invisible, and, with His Father, is sanctified in the heights above, for that He is Lord and God from eternity. This is our doctrine in every country and in every region. And so |26 have we been commanded to preach to those who hear us, not violently, but by the teaching of the truth and by the power of God. And the miracles which were done in His name, testify concerning our faith, that it is true and to be believed. Be obedient, therefore, to my words, and receive that which I have said, and am saying before you; and that I may not require your death, behold, I warn you to be very cautious. Receive my words fitly, and do not neglect. Draw nigh to me ye my distant ones from Christ, and be near to Christ. And in the place Of erroneous sacrifices and oblations, offer now to Him the sacrifices of thanksgiving.

What is this great altar which ye have built in the midst of this city? and what are those going and coming offering upon it to demons, and sacrificing on it to devils? But if ye know not the Scriptures, doth not nature itself teach you, by its power of sight, that your idols have eyes and see not? And ye 49 who see with eyes in that ye do not understand, ye are also as they who see not and hear not, and in vain you excite your voices, ineffective to deaf ears. For they are not to be complained of for that which they do not hear, because that by nature they are deaf and dumb. And the blame with which justice is involved is yours, for ye do not wish to understand, even that which ye see. For the thick darkness of error, which is spread over your mind, permits you not to acquire the heavenly light, which is the understanding of knowledge. Flee, therefore, from things made and created, as I have said unto you, that in name only are they called gods, though they are not gods in their nature; and draw near to Him, who in His nature is |27 God from eternity and from everlasting, and is not made as your idols, and also not a creature, and a work of art as the images in which ye make your boast. Because that although He put on this body, He was God with His Father; for the works of creation, which trembled when He was slain, and were terrified by the suffering of His death, they testify that He is He who created the works of creation. For it was not for a man the earth shook, but for Him who established the earth upon the waters; and it was not for a man the sun became dark in the heavens, but for Him who made the great lights. And it was not by a man the righteous and the just were raised to life, but by Him who gave power over death from the beginning. Nor was it by a man the vail of the temple of the Jews was rent from the top to the bottom, but by Him who said to them, 'Behold, your house is left desolate.'50 For, behold, except they who crucified Him knew that He was the Son of God, they would not have proclaimed the desolation of their city, also they would not have brought down woes upon themselves. For even if they wished to neglect this confession, the terrible commotions which were at that time would not have permitted them. Behold also some of the children of the crucifiers have become at this day preachers and evangelists, with the Apostles my companions, in all the land of Palestine and among the Samaritans, and in all the country of the Philistines. The idols of paganism also are despised, and the Cross of Christ is honoured. Peoples and creatures also confess God, who became man. If truly when Jesus our Lord was upon earth ye believed in Him that He is the Son of God, and before that ye had heard the word of |28 His preaching, confessed in Him that He is God; now that He has ascended to His Father, and ye have seen the signs and wonders which are done in His name, and the word of His Gospel ye have heard with your ears; not a man of you should let himself doubt in his mind how the promise of His blessing which He sent to you would have been established with you: "Blessed are ye who have believed in me, although ye have not seen me; and because ye have so believed in me

the city in which ye dwell shall be blessed, and the enemy shall not prevail against it for ever."[51] Do not, therefore, turn from His faith; for, behold, ye have heard and seen those things which bear witness to His faith, that He is the adorable Son, and is the glorious God, and is the triumphant King, and is the Omnipotent Power; and by His true faith a man is able to acquire the eye of the true mind, and to perceive that every one who worships creatures, the wrath of justice overtakes him.

For everything which we say before you, we say as we have received of the gift of our Lord, and we teach and we show how to possess your life, and not destroy your spirits by the error of paganism; because that the heavenly light hath risen upon creation, and He it is, who hath chosen the ancient fathers and the just men and the Prophets, and hath spoken with them by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. For He is the God of the Jews, who crucified Him, and the erring Gentiles also worship Him, though they know it not; because that there is no |29 other God in heaven and in earth, and behold confession ascendeth up to Him from the four quarters of the earth. Behold now your ears have heard that which was not heard by you before, and behold, again, your eyes have seen that which was never seen by you before. Be ye not therefore unjust to that which ye have heard and seen. Cause to pass from you the rebellious mind of your fathers, and free yourselves from the yoke of sin, which hath dominion over you by libations and sacrifices before graven images. Let it be a care to you concerning your perishing lives, and concerning the vain bowing of your head, and acquire the new mind which worships the Maker and not the thing made, in which is represented the image of truth and verity, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, when ye believe and are baptized in the triple and glorious names. For this is our doctrine and our preaching. For it is not in many things that the truth of Christ is believed. And such of you as are willing to be obedient to Christ, know that many times I have repeated my words before you, that ye might learn and understand whatsoever ye hear. And we will rejoice in this, as a husbandman in his field which is blessed; and our God is glorified by your repentance towards Him. And as ye live in this, we also who counsel you thus will not be defrauded of the blessed reward of this. And because I am confident that ye are a blessed land, according to the will of the Lord Christ, therefore for the dust of my feet which we have been commanded [52] to shake off against the city that receiveth not our words; behold I shake off to-day at the door of your ears the words of my lips, in which the |30 coming of Christ is represented, that which has been, and that which is about to be, and the resurrection and resuscitation of all men, and the separation which is to be between the faithful and unbelieving, and the blessed promise of future joys which they who have believed in Christ and worshipped His high Father, and confessed Him and the Spirit of His godhead, shall receive. And now it is right for us to finish our present discourse, and let those who have received the word of Christ remain with us, and also those who wish to be associated, with us in prayer, and then let them go to their homes."

And Addai the Apostle rejoiced in this when he saw that the multitude of the population of the city remained with him, and there were few who did not remain at that time; and these same few, after a few days, received his words and believed in the gospel of the preaching of Christ.

And when Addai the Apostle had said these things before all the city of Edessa, and Abgar the king saw that all the city rejoiced in his doctrine, men and women equally, and were saying to him "Christ, who hath sent thee to us is true and faithful," and he also greatly rejoiced at this, praising God, that according to what he had heard from Hannan, his tabularius, concerning Christ, so he had seen the marvellous mighty works which Addai the Apostle had done in the name of Christ. And Abgar the king also said to Addai the Apostle, As I sent to Christ by my letter to Him; and as He also sent to me and I have received from thee thyself this day; so will I believe all the days of my life, and in the same things continue, exulting, because I know that there is no other power in the name of whom these signs and wonders are done, but by

the power of Christ, whom thou preachest in truth and verity. And now I will worship Him, |31 I and Ma'nu,53 my son, and Augustina, and Shalmath the queen. And now, wherever thou wishest, build a church, a house of assembly for those who have believed, and shall believe in thy words. And, as commanded thee by thy Lord, minister thou at times with confidence. And those who are teachers with thee of this Gospel, I am prepared to deliver to them large gifts, that they may not have any other work with the ministry. Everything also which is required by thee for the expenses of the house, I will give thee without taking account; thy word shall be powerful and have rule in this city, and without another man, have thou authority to enter into my presence in my royal palace of honour.

And when Abgar the king went down to his royal palace, he rejoiced, he and his princes with him, Abdu and Garmai, and Shamshagram, and Abubai, and Meherdath, with the rest of their companions, at everything which their eyes had seen, and their ears had heard, and in the joy of their heart they also praised God, who had turned their mind to Him; they renounced the paganism in which they stood, and confessed the Gospel of Christ. And when Addai had built a church, they offered in it vows and offerings, they and the people of the city, and there they worshipped all the days of their life.

And Avida 54 and Bar-kalba who were chiefs and rulers, and clothed with royal headbands 55, drew near to Addai, and they asked Addai concerning the |32 history of Christ, to tell them how that He being God was seen by them, as man, and how ye were able to see Him. And he satisfied them all concerning this, concerning all which their eyes had seen, and concerning all which their ears had heard of Him. And every thing which the Prophets had said of Him, he repeated before them, and they received his words gladly and faithfully, and there was not a man who rose up against him. For the glorious things which he did permitted not a man to rise up against him.

Shavida and Ebednebo, chiefs of the priests of this city, with Piroz 56 and Dancu 57 their companions, when they saw the signs which he did, ran and threw down the altars upon which they sacrificed before Nebo and Bel their gods, except the great altar, which was in the midst of the city, and they cried out and said, that this is truly the disciple of the distinguished and glorious Master of whom we heard all those things, which He did in the country of Palestine. And all who believed in Christ, Addai received, and baptized them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And those who were accustomed to worship stones and stocks, sat at his feet, learning, and being corrected of the plague of the foolishness of paganism. The Jews also, conversant with the Law and the Prophets, who carried on |33 merchandise in silks, 58 were also persuaded and became disciples, and made confession in Christ, that He is the Son of the living God. But neither Abgar the king, nor Addai the Apostle pressed any man by force to believe in Christ; because without the force of man, the force of the signs compelled many to believe in Him. And all this country of Mesopotamia, and all the regions round about it received his doctrine with love.

But Aggai made the chains 59 and headbands of the king, and Palut and Abshelama 60 and Barsamya with the rest of the others their companions, adhered to Addai the Apostle, and he received them and made them partakers with him in the ministry; they read in the Old Testament 61 and the New, and the Prophets, and the Acts of the Apostles, every day they meditated on them. He commanded them cautiously, "Let your bodies be pure, and let your persons be holy; as is right for men who stand before the altar of God; and be ye indeed far |34 removed from false swearing, and from wicked murder, and from false testimony, which is mixed with adultery, and from sorcerers with respect to whom there are no mercies, and from divinations, and soothsaying, and necromancers, and from fates, and nativities, in which the erring Chaldees boast themselves; and from stars, and the signs of the Zodiac, in which the foolish are confident. And keep at a distance from you evil hypocrisy, and bribes, and gifts, by which the pure are condemned. And with this ministry to which ye have been called,

let there not be for you another service; for the Lord Himself is the service of your ministry all the days of your life. Be ye also diligent to deliver the sign of baptism, and love ye not the gains of this world, but hearken ye to judgment with justice and truth. And be ye not a stumbling block to the blind, that the name of Him who opened the eyes of the blind, as we have seen, be not blasphemed through you. Let all, therefore, who see you, perceive that ye perform all which ye preach and teach. And they ministered with him in the church which Addai had built by the word and command of Abgar the king, and they were supplied from that which was the king's and his nobles; and some of them they brought for the house of God, and some for the nourishment of the poor. But a large multitude of people assembled day by day and came to the prayer of the service, and to the reading of the Old and New Testament, of the Diatessaron, 62 and they believed in the revival of the dead, and |35 they buried their dead in the hope of the resurrection. They also observed the festivals of the Church in their times, and every day they were constant in the vigils of the Church, and they likewise performed acts of charity to the sick and those who were whole, according to the instruction of Addai to them. And in places round about the city churches were built, and the hand of the priesthood many received from him: So also orientals with the appearance of merchants passed into the country of the Romans to see the signs which Addai did, and those of them who became disciples, received from them 63 the hand of the priesthood, and in their own country of the Assyrians they taught the sons of their people, and houses of prayer they built there secretly, because of the danger arising from the worshippers of fire and the adorers of water.64

But Nersai,65 the king of the Assyrians, when he had heard of these things which Addai the Apostle had done, he sent to Abgar, the king; either send me the man who |36 hath done these signs with thee, that I may see him and hear his discourse, or send me an account of all these things which thou hast seen him do in thy city. And Abgar wrote to Nersai and made him acquainted with the whole history of the affair of Addai from the beginning to the end, and he left not any thing which he did not write to him.

But when Nersai heard those things which were written to him, he wondered and was astonished. But Abgar the king, because that he was not able to pass to the country of the Romans, and to go to Palestine and slay the Jews, because that they had crucified Christ, wrote a letter and sent to Tiberius Caesar, writing it thus: "Abgar, the king, to our Lord Tiberius Caesar, peace. Knowing that not anything is hidden from thy Majesty, I write and inform thy dread and great sovereignty, that the Jews, who are under thy hand, who dwell in the country of Palestine, assembled themselves together and crucified the Christ without any fault worthy of death, when he was doing before them signs and wonders, and showed them mighty works and signs; so |37 that even the dead He raised to life for them. And at the time they crucified Him, the sun became darkened and the earth shook, and all creatures trembled, and as if of themselves, at this deed all creation quailed, and its inhabitants. And now thy majesty knows what is right to command against the people of the Jews, who did these things."

And Tiberius Caesar wrote and sent to Abgar the king, and thus he wrote to him: "The letter of thy fidelity to me, I have received, and it was read before me. With respect to that which the Jews have done with the cross, Pilate the governor hath also written, and informed Olbinus, 66 my pro-consul, of these things which thou hast written to me. But because of the war of the Spaniards who have rebelled against me is going on at this time, therefore I have not been able to avenge this matter; but I am prepared, when I have quietness, to make a charge legally against the Jews, who have not acted legally. And because of this, as to Pilate, who was made by me governor there, I have sent another in his place, and I have dismissed him with disgrace, because that he departed from the law, and did the will of the Jews, and he crucified Christ for the gratification of the Jews, who according to that which I hear of them,

instead of the cross of death, it was fitting that He should be honoured, and it was right He should be worshipped by them, especially as they saw with their eyes all which He did. But thou, according to thy fidelity to me and thy true |38 compact and that of thy fathers, hast done well to write to me thus."

And Abgar the king, received Aristides,67 who was sent to him by Tiberius Caesar, and he replied, sent him back with honourable gifts, which were suitable for him, who had sent him to him. And he departed from Edessa, and went to Ticnutha,68 where was Claudius the second, from the king, and from there also he went to Artica,69 where was Tiberius Caesar. But Gaius guarded the regions, which were round about the Emperor. And Aristides himself also recounted before Tiberius the mighty works which Addai did before Abgar the king. And when he had rest from the war, he sent, slew some of the chiefs of the Jews, who were in Palestine. And when Abgar the king heard, he greatly rejoiced at this, that the Jews had received punishment, as it was right.

And some years after Addai the Apostle had built the church in Edessa, and furnished it with everything which was suitable for it, and had taught many of the population of the city, also in the other villages, both those which were distant, and those which were near, he built churches, and completed and ornamented them, and appointed in them deacons and elders, and |39 taught in them those who should read the Scriptures, and the orders of the ministry within and without he taught. After all these things he became ill with the disease, by which he departed from this world.70 And he called Aggai before all the congregation of the church, and he brought him near, and made him governor and ruler in his place. And concerning Palut, who was a deacon, he made him an elder, and of Abshelama, who was a scribe, he made him a deacon. And when the nobles and chiefs were assembled and stood by him, Bar-kalba and 71 Bar-Zati, and Marihab, the son of Barshemesh, and Sennac, son of Avida, and Peroz, son of Patricius, with the rest of their companions, Addai the Apostle said to them: "Ye know, and ye testify, all of you who hear me, that everything which I have preached to you and taught you, and ye have heard from me, so have I conducted myself among you, and ye have seen also in works, because that thus our Lord commanded us that whatsoever we preach in words before the people, we in work should do before every man. And according to the ordinances and laws which were appointed in Jerusalem, and by which also the Apostles, my companions, were governed, |40 so also ye, do not turn aside from them, and do not take away anything from them, as I myself also have been guided by them among you, and have not turned aside from them to the right hand, or to the left, that I might not become strange to the promised salvation, which is reserved for those who are guided by them. Take heed, therefore, to this ministry which ye hold, and with fear and trembling abide ye in it, and minister every day. Minister not in it with habits bringing contempt, but with the prudence of faith; and the praises of Christ, let them not cease from your mouth, and let not weariness in prayer at the stated times draw near to you. Take heed to the truth, which ye hold, and to the teaching of the truth, which ye have received, and to the inheritance of salvation, which I commend to you, because before the judgment-seat of Christ you will be sought out by Him, when He taketh account with the pastors and superiors, and when He taketh His money from merchants with the increase of gains. For He is the king's son, and goes to receive a kingdom, and to return, and to come and make a resurrection for all men; and then He sitteth on the throne of righteousness, and judgeth the dead and the living, as He hath said to us. Let not the secret eye of your mind from the height above be closed, that your offences may not multiply in the way in which there are no offences; nor abominable error in its ways. Seek ye those that are lost, and visit those that err, and rejoice ye in those that are found. Bind up those that are bruised, and be ye watchful of the fatlings, because at your hands will the sheep of Christ be required. Look ye not to passing honour, for the shepherd that looketh to be honoured by his flock, badly, badly with respect to him does his flock stand. Let your solicitude for the |41 young

lambs be great, for their angels 72 behold the face of the invisible Father, and be ye not a stone of stumbling before the blind, but clearers 73 of the way and the path in a difficult country, among the Jews, the crucifiers, and the erring heathen; for with these two parties only is there war for you, in order to show the truth of the faith, which ye hold; also when ye are quiet, your modest and honourable appearance will be fighting for you with those who hate truth and love falsehood. Be ye not smiters of the poor before the rich, for the severe infliction of their poverty is sufficient for them. Be ye not beguiled with the hateful cogitations of Satan, that ye be not stripped naked of the faith that ye have put on,74 for unbelief is easier than faith, as sin is easier than righteousness. Take heed, therefore, of those that crucified, that ye be not friends to them, that ye be not responsible with them whose hands are full of the blood of Christ; and ye know, and ye bear witness, that everything which we say and teach of the history of Christ, is written in the Book of the Prophets, and deposited with them. And their words bear witness to our teaching concerning the judgment, and suffering, and resurrection, and ascension of Christ; but they know not, that when they rise against us they rise against the words of the Prophets, and as in their lives they persecuted the Prophets, so also now, since their death, they persecute the truth, which is written in the Prophets. Again, take ye heed of the heathen, who worship the sun and the moon, and Bel and Nebo, and the rest of those which they call gods, though they are not gods in their nature. |42 Flee ye, therefore, from them, because that they worship creatures and things made. And as reported to you before, the whole object 75 for which our Lord came into the world was that creatures might not again be worshipped and honoured, because they exist by the nod of their Creator; and when He wishes, He dissolves and makes them cease, and they are as though they are not. For the will of Him, who created the creatures, freed men from the yoke of the paganism of the creatures. For ye know that every one who worships the servants of a king with the king, the death of the sword findeth him in his worship. Be ye not searching for secret things, and inquiring after hidden things, which are written in the holy books that ye possess. Be ye not judges concerning the words of the Prophets. Remember and consider that by the Spirit of God they are said; and he who accuses the Prophets, accuses and judges the Spirit of God. May this be far from you I Because the ways of the Lord are straight, and the righteous walk in them without stumbling; but the infidels stumble in them; because that they have not the secret eye of the secret mind, which has no need of questions in which there is no profit, but loss.76 Remember the menacing judgment of the Prophets, and the word of our Lord, which defines their words, that the Lord judgeth by fire, and all men are tried by it. Wherefore, as wayfarers |43 and sojourners, who tarry for a night and return early to their homes, so may you yourselves consider concerning this world, that from here ye go forth to the places where the Son went to prepare for every one worthy of them. As to kings of countries, their armies go forth before them, and prepare for them a dwelling-house for their honour; but this King of ours, behold, He is gone to prepare for His worshippers blessed mansions 77 in which they may dwell. For it was not in vain God created the children of men; but that they might worship and glorify Him. here and there for ever. As He passeth not away, so those glorifying Him cease not. Wherefore my death also, with the disease of which I am bound and lie; as a sleep of the night, let it be esteemed in your eyes. And remember that with the suffering of the Son, Death, which snatches away the children of men, passed away and ceased; and Satan, who causes many to sin and makes war with the true, that they may be without truth. And as a husbandman who puts his hand to the ploughshare, if he looks behind,78 the furrows before him cannot be straight; so also ye who have been called to this gift of the ministry, be ye cautious, that ye do not trouble yourselves with the things of this world, lest by chance ye be impeded as to that to which ye have been called.

As to princes and judges, who have embraced this faith, be ye loving them, although do not simulate in any thing, and if they sin, ye reprove them with justice. Ye shall show them

openly your rectitude, that they may be corrected so as not again to conduct themselves after their own will. This solicitude ye shall have all the days |44 of your life, that all of you may run after honest things, as ye also counsel others with respect to them; for in these things men find their life before God.
But the Law,79 and the Prophets, and the Gospel, which ye read every day before the people, and the Epistles of Paul, which Simon Peter sent us from the city of Rome, and the Acts of the twelve Apostles, which John, the son of Zebedee, sent us from Ephesus; these Books read ye in the churches of Christ, and with these read not any others, as there is not any other in which the truth that ye hold is written, except these books, which retain you in the faith to which ye have been called. And our lord Abgar the king, and his honoured nobles, who have heard that which I have spoken before you to day are sufficient to be for me witnesses after my death, that I have diligently preached the doctrine of our Lord before every man, and that I have not acquired anything with His word in the world. For His word by which I have become rich was sufficient for me, and I have made by it many rich; for it lifts me up in this way in which I go forth before Christ, who has sent after me, that I should go by it to Him. For ye know that which I have said to you, "That all the souls of men, which depart from this body, die not; but they live and rise, and have mansions, and a dwelling-place of rest, |45 for the understanding and the intelligence of the soul do not cease, because the image of God is represented in it, which dieth not. For it is not as the body without feeling which perceives not the odious corruption which has come upon it. Eeward and recompense it is not able to receive without it (the body); because that labour was not its only, but also of the body in which it dwelt. But the rebellious who know not God, they become penitent then to no purpose. Ye, indeed, who are of Christ, whose glorious name is placed upon you, and ruleth, He will direct you in the way of truth, in which, ye shall go and shall arrive at and attain to that which is promised and kept for those who depart not from Him; but abide according to what they were called to by our Lord.
And when Addai the Apostle had said this word, he ceased and was silent. And Aggai, maker of the king's chains, and Palut, and Abshelama, with the rest of their companions, answered and said to Addai the Apostle, "Christ Himself has testified that He sent thee to us, and thou hast taught us the true faith, and hast made us possess the true life. As we have heard from thee and received, all this time thou hast been with us, so we abide all the days of our life. And from the worship of things made and created, which our fathers worshipped, we flee, and with 80 the Jews, the crucifiers we will not mix ourselves; and this inheritance, which we have received from thee, we do not let go, but with it we will depart from this world. And in the day of our Lord, before the judgment-seat of righteousness, there will He return to us this inheritance as that thou hast said to us.
And when these things had been said, Abgar the king, |46 arose, he and his princes, and all the nobles of his kingdom, and he went to his own palace, when all of them grieved over him, for he was dying. And he sent to him honourable and costly garments, in which he should be buried; and when Addai saw them, he sent word to him, that not in my life have I taken from thee anything, and I will not falsify in me the word of Christ, which He said to me, "Receive not anything from man, arid acquire not anything in this world."81 And after three other days, that these things were said by Addai the Apostle, and he had heard and received the testimony of the doctrine of his preaching from the sons of his ministry, before all the nobles, he departed from this world, and it was the fifth day of the week, in the fourteenth of the month Eyor.82 And the whole city was in great sorrow and bitter pain; not only Christians sorrowed for Him, but also Jews and Pagans, who were in this city. But king Abgar more than any man sorrowed for him, he and the princes of his kingdom. And in the grief of his |47 mind he despised and forsook the honour of his kingdom on that day; and with mournful tears he wept over him with every man. And all the people of the city, who saw him, wondered at how

much he suffered because of him. And with great and excellent honour he carried and buried him, as one of the princes, when he dies, and he placed him in a great sepulchre of ornamental sculpture, in which those of the house of Aryu, the ancestors of the father of king Abgar, were placed. There he placed him carefully with grief and great sorrow. And all the people of the church went from time to time, and prayed there diligently, and the commemoration of his death they made from year to year, according to the command and instruction which was received by them from Addai the Apostle, and according to the word of Aggai, who was himself the guide and ruler and the successor of his chair after him, by the hand of the priesthood, which he had received from him before every man.

And he also by the hand from which he received made priests and guides in all this country of Mesopotamia. For they also, as of Addai the Apostle, thus took his word and heard and received, as a good and faithful heir of the Apostle of the adorable Christ. But silver and gold he took not from man, and the gifts of the princes approached him not. For instead of gold and silver he enriched the Church of Christ with the souls of the faithful. But all the chiefs [83] of men and women |48 were modest and decorous, and they were holy and pure, and they dwelt singly and modestly without spot, in watchfulness of the ministry decorously, in their carefulness for the poor, in their visitations to the sick; for their goings forth were full of praise from those who saw, and their conversation was covered with glory from strangers; so that even the priests of the temple of Nebo and Bel divided with them the honour at all times, by their honourable aspect, by their truthful discourse, by the confidence which they possessed, and by their freedom, which was not enslaved to greediness, and was not in bondage under blame. For every one who saw them ran to meet them, that he might honourably salute them; because even the sight of them spread peace over the beholders. For their words of peace were spread like nets over the rebellious, when they were entering the fold of truth and verity. For there was no man who saw them, and was ashamed of them; because they did not anything which was not just, and which was not becoming, and in consequence of this their countenances were open in the preaching of their doctrine to every man. For whatsoever they said to others and directed them, they exhibited the same by works in themselves; and as to the hearers, who saw that their works were with their words, many became their disciples without persuasion, and confessed Christ the king, praising God who had turned them to Him.

And years after the death of Abgar the king, one of |49 his rebellious sons,[84] who was not obedient to the truth, arose and sent word to Aggai, when he was sitting in the Church: "Make me headbands of gold, according to that which thou didst make for my fathers of old." Aggai sent him word: "I desert not the ministry of Christ, which has been committed to me by the disciple of Christ, and make headbands of wickedness." [85] And when he saw that he did not obey him, he sent, and broke his legs, as he was sitting in the church and expounding. And as he was dying he made Palut and Abshelama swear that in this house, for the sake of whose name, behold, I die, place me and bury me. And as he made them swear, so they placed him within the middle door of the church, between the men and the women. And there was great and bitter sorrow in all the church, and in all the city, above the pain of sorrow, which had been |50 in its interior, as the sorrow, which had been when Addai the Apostle died.

And because that by the breaking of his legs he died suddenly and quickly, he was not able to place the hand upon Palut.[86] Palut himself went to Antioch, and received the hand of the priesthood from Serapion, Bishop of Antioch. Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, himself also received the hand from Zephyrinus, Bishop of the city of Rome,[87] from the succession of the hand of the priesthood of Simon Cephas, which he received from our Lord, who was there Bishop of Rome twenty-five years, in the days of the Caesar, who reigned there thirteen years.

And as is the custom in the kingdom of Abgar the king, and in all kingdoms, that everything which the king commands, and everything that is said before him is written down and placed

among the records, so also Labubna, the son of Sennac, the son of Abshadar, the king's scribe, wrote these things of Addai the Apostle, from the beginning to the end. Hannan also, the Tabularius, the king's Sharrir, set the hand of witness, and placed it among the records of the writings of the kings, where are put the commands and laws, and the contracts of those who buy and sell are kept there with care, without any negligence.
THE END OF THE DOCTRINE OF ADDAI THE APOSTLE.

[Footnotes numbered and moved to end]
1. a Addai. According to Eusebius, Addai was one of the seventy disciples of Christ. See also p. 5.
2. b Abgar. This king is called here the son of Ma'nu. Of the twenty-nine kings of Edessa mentioned by Assemani, in his edition of the Chronicon Edessenum, Bibl. Or. tom. i. p. 417, ten bore the name of Abgar, and ten that of Ma'nu. The meaning of Abgar in Syriac is lame. Lower down we find Abgar called Ukkama. The latter word is a Syriac adjective, signifying black, and it may have been used because his skin was of a blackish hue. A previous king of Edessa was called Abgar the Red.
3. c Edessa is called, in Syriac, Urhai.
4. d The Seleucian era, which corresponds to B.C. 312-311.
5. e Marihab and Shamshagram. In regard to many of the proper names in this book, it is a matter of conjecture where the vowels should be inserted. In these two I have followed the French translation of the Armenian version. The latter name Cureton, in a note on Bardesanes, in his Spicilegium Syriacum, p. 77, calls Shemashgram. In Greek it is written Samyige/ramoj or Samyike/ramoj.
6. a Hannan. This name is written in Cureton's text according to the Greek form. Further on, however, in the same text, we have Hanan. He is called in our text tabularius, but in Cureton's tabellarius. The former is more probably correct. Perhaps it and the following word, Sharrir, express, the one in Latin and the other in Syriac, the same office, viz. that of keeper of the archives. There is a passage in the Chronicle of Edessa, in which those who were placed over the archives of a city were called the Sharrirs of that city. Bibl. Or. tom. i. p. 393.
7. b Beth-gubrin. "Ville connue déjà par Ptolémée, qui écrit Baitograbra_." ---- Lettre d' Abgar, p. 11. It is still called Beit-jibrin.
8. c Reply. [Syriac] usually signifies a copy; but here it seems rather to mean a reply to the letters which were brought to Sabinus.
9. a March.
10. b April.
11. a The word in Syriac is [Syriac], "the chief," a title of dignity among the Jews.
12. b [Syriac], spirits. Some adjective, signifying unclean, such as [Syriac] is perhaps to be understood with this noun.
13. c From the expression "it is written," one would infer that these words are a quotation from the Old Testament; but they are not to be found in any part of that sacred Book. Our Lord said to Thomas: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (St. John xx. 29.) The passage in this reply is somewhat like these words. Although these words are not found in the Old Testament, they are like passages there in sense. See Is. vi. 9; lii. 15.
14. a There is a tradition preserved by Eusebius, see Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, under 'Jude,' that the true name of Thomas (the twin) was Judas ('Iou&daj o(kai\ Qwma~j). It is therefore probable that Judas is mentioned in the text to certify that it was the Apostle Thomas, and not another Thomas, who sent Addai to Edessa. See also Wright's Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, p. [Syriac].
15. a Tobias. Moses of Chorene calls Tobias Prince Juif, and says: "Qu'on dit être de la race des Pacradouni." It appears, on the same authority, that he did not abjure Judaism with his

relations, but followed its laws up to the time when he believed in Christ.
16. b Abdu. Moses of Chorene says of Abdu that he was "Prince de la ville, très honoré dans toute la maison du roi."
17. c With a bending of the knees. The Syriac word is [Syriac], which, according to Castle, means genuflexio, but he cites no instance in which the noun occurs. The verb is found several times, but the noun is evidently very rare. Castle himself got the word from Bar Bahul.
18. a Cureton's text of this document begins here. It is taken from the Nitrian collection in the British Museum, No. 14,654, at fol. 33. It is contained in one leaf only.
19. b A long time. The time is not mentioned by Eusebius in his Eccle siastical History. Moses of Chorene, bk. ii. chap. xxx. p. 217, Histoire D'Arménie, says that Abgar suffered from a disease which he had caught in Persia more than seven years before, and that he had obtained no remedy for it from men.
20. a Moses of Chorene speaks of Helena as the first wife of Abgar, that she was a pious woman, and renounced idolatry. He says the tomb of Helena was a very remarkable one, and was to be seen in his day before the gate of Jerusalem. Book II. c. 35, ed. Le Vaillant de Florival.
21. a With this word ends Cureton's text, p. [Syriac].
22. b "L'Histoire detachée de la première invention de la Croix dit plus clairement que c'était Claude qui alla centre les Espagnols pendant que Tibere était absent de Rome. Cette guerre d'Espagne mentionnee ici et plus bas dans la lettre de Tibere a Abgar n'est citée par aucun auteur Romain: cependant il est très probable que notre auteur fait allusion aux intrigues et aux spoliations des biens des hommes les plus riches d'Espagne et de Gaule, faites par l'ordre de Tibère (v. Suétone, Tiber. 49; Tacite, Annal. vi. 19)."----Lettre d'Abgar, p. 19.
23. c Second in authority.
24. a A leaf is missing in the MS. after fol. 7. It must have been lost at an early date, and its place is now supplied by a rudely written leaf of the twelfth or thirteenth century. It fills the gap in the Syriac text, caused by the loss of the original. This leaf, having become loose, has been bound as fol. 54 of the MS., in the middle of the Acts of St. John at Ephesus (see Wright's Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, p. 3); moreover, it has been reversed in binding, so that what is really the recto now appears as the verso.
25. a This story of the finding of the cross is the same in most of its details as that which is told of the discovery of it by Helena, the mother of Constantine. It is related of Helena, that on her arrival at Jerusalem, she resolved to lay the foundation of a church, dedicated to the true God, on Mount Calvary. In digging, some pieces of wood were discovered, which were recognised as belonging to the cross of our Saviour. These pieces were sent by Helena to Constantine.
26. a In the French translation of the Armenian version this name is called Phocreas, also Azzai is called Aghi. The orthography of proper names is often modified, to adapt them to the language in which they appear.
27. a The French translation has "Avité fils d'Abdékhil." Lower down, the same name is called Avida.
28. a Labubna. In the French, translation of the Armenian version, this name is written Leboubnia. Moses of Chorene has made a change in the consonants; he calls the name Ghéroupna. Whiston has written the name Lerubnas: "Lerubnas, Apsadari scribas filius, omnes res gestas Abgari et Sanatrucis conscripsit, atque in Tabulario Edesseno posuit," p. 146.
29. b Chesrun. There is mention of this person in Moses of Chorene, lib. ii.: "Abgar s'étant rendu dans sa ville d'Édesse, se ligua avec Arète, roi de Petra, et lui donna des troupes auxiliaires, sous la conduite de Khosran Ardzrouni, pour faire la guerre à Hérode." The name occurs again in p. 237 of the Second Book of the same work.

30. a [Syriac], being in apposition with [Syriac] seems to have the meaning given to it above.
31. b The word rendered divinity was not very much employed till after the times of the Apostles, when Christianity had become to some extent a system, and theological words had begun to be made use of to give it definiteness.
32. c The words which immediately follow are evidently very similar to what we find in St. John xiii. 31. There is very little variation between them and the passage as it is read in the Peshitta version.
33. a This is a quotation from Isaiah xlviii. 16. The plural pronoun us for me is the only variation. This may he because Addai is speaking in the context in the plural number, viz. "the Prophets of old."
34. b The sense seems to require Dolath instead of Vau, Beth, before the Syriac word for Prophets. This suggestion is supported by the Armenian version.
35. c It is here that Cureton's text recommences, p. [Syriac]. The said text, beginning here and continuing to the end, is taken from a MS. different from that in which the previous part of his text appears, viz. from a MS. of the Nitrian collection in the British Museum, Cod. Add. 14,644.
36. a Il fait allusion à la confusion, des langues au Sénaar dans la Baby-lonie, qui n'est pas très loin de la contrée où prêchait S. Thaddée." Lettre d'Abgar.
37. b Paneas, the same as Caesarea Philippi.
38. c Here is found another break in Cureton's text, p. [Syriac].
39. d The sense of this expression I apprehend to be, that erroneous thoughts only fill the mind with despair of being able to escape a bitter death.
40. a The text of Cureton is found to recommence at this place, p. [Syriac].
41. b [Syriac], according to Pratten, is here equal to omnino. Page 15 of Syriac Documents.
42. c Here is found another break in Cureton's text. p. [Syriac].
43. a Justice. [Syriac] is equal in sense to [Syriac]. The former word is not unfrequently found in old Syriac MSS. See this word a little lower down.
44. b By here and there, understand this world and the world to come.
45. c Nebo was an idol of the Babylonians. Traces of this deity are observed in the proper names, Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan, &c. Nebo seems also to have been worshipped in other places. In Isaiah xlvi. 1, we read that "Nebo stoopeth." It is supposed that at Dibon, a city of Moab, was a temple to Nebo. See Selden, "De Diis Syris." Syntagma II. chap. xii.
46. a Bel was a Babylonian deity. Calmet thinks that the sun was worshipped under this name. But worshipping the sun is mentioned lower down, and further it must, according to Addai, have been an object of worship distinct from Bel. The worshippers of Bel attributed to him the gift of healing diseases, and asserted that he ate and drank. See the apocryphal story of the Bel and Dragon.
47. b Bath Nical. It is here stated that this idol was worshipped in Harran. There does not appear to be much known with any certainty about it. In the history of Armenia, by Moses of Chorene, translated from the Armenian into French by P. E. le Vaillant de Florival, liv. ii. c. 27, this goddess is called Pathincagh. One has not heard of a god called Nical, and therefore it may be inferred that Bath Nical was a goddess invested with the attribute or attributes implied in the word [Syriac]. The sense of this word, however, is uncertain. The root has been supposed to be the Hebrew [Hebrew] 'He was able.' If this be correct, the distinguishing attribute of this goddess would accordingly be power. It has also been suggested that, [Syriac] is an epithet of Venus = [Syriac] = dolio&frwn Afrodi/th.
48. c Taratha. Jacob of Serug, see Assemani, Bibliotheca Orient. I. 327, mentions this goddess with others, viz. Nebo, Bel, Sin, Bel-shemin, Bar-Nemre, Gadlat, &c. It is thought that Taratha, or Atargatis as she was also called, is considered to have been a correlative of Dagon. Diodorus Siculus says (lib. ii.) that at Askelon the goddess Derceto or Atargatis was

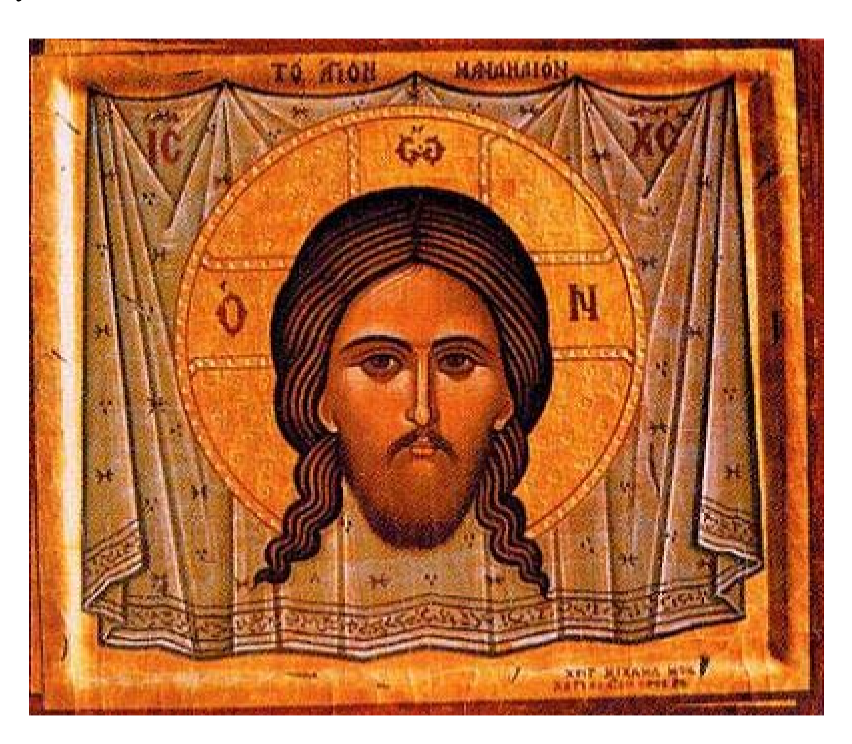
worshipped under the figure of a woman with the lower parts of a fish. (See Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible, under Dagon.) Assemani, in a note at the foot of the page cited above, says: "Tarata, Janus fortasse Syrorum nam Tara est Janua, unde faemininum Tarata, quod faeminae specie illud idolum colerent. See the discourse of Jacob of Serug, on the Fall of the Idols, published by M. l'Abbé Martin, in the Zeitschrift of the German Oriental Society, note and translation, p. 131, for the year 1875. These four divinities, in Whiston's Latin translation of Moses of Chorene, are Nabogus, Belus, Bathnicalus and Tharatha.
49. a Here Cureton's text commences, p. [Syriac].
50. a Matth. xxiii. 38.
51. a The city in which ye dwell, &c. This is a quotation from the message of our Lord to Abgar. See p. 5. The passage in this message seems to have given rise to the notion very prevalent and mentioned by several Syriac writers, that Edessa would be henceforth free from hostile invasion and be especially blessed and protected by God.
52. a Matth. x. 14.
53. a Abgar's father bore the name of Ma'nu as well as his son; indeed it is said that he had two sons of that name. This is probably the one who succeeded his father as king. It was the name of many kings of Edessa. See note p. 1.
54. b Avida. In Cureton's text it is [Syriac], evidently a mistake in the MS.
55. c Headlands, According to our Syriac text [Syriac] of [Syriac] has no point to show whether it be a Dolath or a Resh. In Cureton's text it is a Dolath, but elsewhere we find it a Resh. As to the meaning of the word, see Dr. Payne Smith's note, cited by Pratten, Syr. Documents, p. 22.
56. a Piroz. According to Cureton, this is supposed to be the same name as that of Berosus.
57. b Dancu. Cureton has [Syriac] Diku.
58. a Silks. So the Syriac word is translated by Cureton. In Luke vii. 25, we have [Syriac] rendered by soft raiment. See also Matt. xi. 8. It is probable from what is here said and referred to by other writers, that the Jews of Edessa carried on an extensive trade with people of other districts and countries.
59. b The word [Syriac] is by some translated chains, and by others silks or muslins. The former rendering is adopted by Castle, and the latter by Moses of Chorene, and although the word is translated chains by Dr. Cureton in a note p. 157, he seems to think it might be more correctly rendered silks. I prefer the former rendering, because in Numb. xxxi. 50, and Isaiah iii. 22, the former but not the latter will suit the context.
60. c Abshelama. In Cureton this name is read Barshelama.
61. d As the Prophets are mentioned by themselves, the Old Testament here probably means no more than the Pentateuch. Similarly, as the Acts of the Apostles are named apart from the New Testament, the latter is probably intended to comprise only the Gospels.
62. a Diatessaron. In the text of Cureton is Ditornon. The reading of the MS., he remarks, is not quite clear, and he is disposed to think that the word ought to be Diatessaron. The reading of the St. Petersburgh MS., as we see, confirms Dr. Cureton's supposition. The Diatessaron was that made by Tatian, and was, as appears from sundry
testimonies, in general use in the Syrian churches in the second century. It was a volume compiled from the Four Gospels, and seems to have been publicly read at Edessa up to the fourth century. Mention is made of it in Asseman. Bibl. Orient, tom. iii. p. 12: The Gospel which Tatian compiled, and he called it the Diatessaron, A commentary was written on this work by Ephraim Syrus, according to what is affirmed by Barsalibe and Bar Hebraeus as recorded in Asseman. Bibl. Orient, tom. I. pp. 57, 58. The former says that Ephraim illustrated the Diatessaron with commentaries; and the latter, in speaking of Tatian's volume, in his work [Syriac], says that the expression "In the beginning was the word "was elucidated by Ephraim.

63. a According to Cureton, him.
64. b Water. In the MS. we have [Syriac] evidently by mistake for [Syriac]. In Cureton's text the latter word is found.
65. c Nersai. Moses of Chorene speaks of this king as le jeune Nerseh p. 229. In the same page is a copy of the Letter which Abgar wrote to Nersai, viz., "Abgar roi des Arméniens, à mon fils Narseh, salut; J'ai reçu ta lettre et tes hommages; j'ai déchargé Béroze de ses fers, et lui ai remis ses offenses, si cela te fait plaisir, donne lui le gouvernement de Ninive. Mais quant à ce que tu m'écris de t'envoyer ce médecin qui fait des miracles et prêche un autre Dieu supérieur au feu et à l'eau, afin que tu puisses le voir et l'entendre, je te dirai: Ce n'était point un médecin selon l'art des hommes, c'était un disciple du fils de Dieu, créateur du feu et de l'eau, il a été destiné, envoyé aux contrées de l'Arménie. Mais un de ses principaux compagnons, nommé Simon, est envoyé dans les contrées de la Perse. Cherche-le, et tu l'entendras, toi, ainsi que ton père Ardachès. Il guérira tous vos maux et vous montrera le chemin de la vie."
66. a Olbinus. It is the opinion of Cureton that this name has been confounded with that of Albinus, who was made governor of Judaea by Nero, A.D. 62. No person of the name of Olbinus was governor of Judaea at the time mentioned in the document, and the opinion referred to is most probably correct, and the mistake arose from some confusion of the editor.
67. a Aristides. In the Armenian version, this name is written Artidias, which in the French translation is corrected according to the reading in the Syriac text.
68. b Ticnutha. "Cureton lit, mais avec doute, Thicuntha au lieu de Nuthicontha, noms tous deux inconnus dans la géographie."----Lettre d'Abgar, p. 45.
69. c Artica. This word may, by placing different vowels to it, be pronounced Ortyka, which Cureton thinks was intended for Ortygia, near to Syracuse, not far distant from Capreae, where Tiberius resided.
70. a A great difference is found here between the Syriac text and the Armenian version. According to the former, Addai had gathered around him the nobles and chiefs, in order that he might deliver unto them his farewell and dying discourse, but in the latter it is said that "the Apostle Addai conceived the thought of visiting the countries of the East and Assyria to preach there," &c. One statement must be erroneous, and authority obliges us to conclude that the error is in the Armenian version.
71. b And. We have a vau in our MS. which is not in Cureton's text, nor is it supported by the Armenian version; we think, therefore, that the reading should be, not Bar-Kalba and Bar-Zati, but Bar Kalba, son of Zati.
72. a See Matth. xviii. 10.
73. b Lit. "purgers of the way."
74. c Here Cureton's text ends.
75. a In p. 22, we find that that for which our Lord came into the world was altogether to teach the resurrection of man. Here it is stated, that the whole object for which our Lord came into the world was that creatures might not again be worshipped. The author is speaking superlatively. In these days we should in each case say a great object, &c.
76. b They spend their time in useless and injurious questions.
77. a See John xiv, 2.
78. b See Luke ix. 62.
79. a We have already had mention of the Old Testament; and the New of the Diatessaron, p. 34. Here we have the Holy Scriptures more particularly specified. The New Testament is described as consisting of the Gospel, the Epistles of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles. The two latter were probably not written at the time that Addai was preaching Christianity in Edessa. If the Gospel mentioned be that of St. Matthew, that might possibly have been then in existence.

80. a Here Cureton's text recommences.
81. a These words are not according to the letter, but are certainly in the spirit of the instructions, which our Lord delivered to the twelve disciples at their ordination, as we read them in Matt. x. 7-10. Anything like desire or anxiety for the things of this world, the disciples of Christ were frequently and in distinct and impressive language warned against by their Master.
82. b Eyor is the Syriac word for the month of May. In Assemani, Bibl. Orient. tom. ii. p. 392, we find it stated, on the authority of Bar Hebraeus, "that Addai the Apostle was slain on the 30th of July, and buried in the church, which he himself had built in Edessa." This date, however, is contradicted in a foot-note on the same page, in the following terms:----"Amrus Matthaei filius historicus Nestorianus, qui Chronicon Maris ejusdem sectae scriptoris in compendium redegit, Addaeum obiise refert, non die 30 Julii, sed 14 Maii. Et quidem in pervetusto Kalendario Syriaco, quod ad calcem Codicis 32 in fine hujus tomi subjicitur, die Maii 14, Addaeus decessisse dicitur."
83. a Chiefs. This is the rendering in the Armenian version, and it seems to me that it is a sense in accordance with the Syriac text. The Syriac noun, among other meanings, signifies a prefect or chief. Every chief is the same as all the chiefs, and so the noun may agree with the plural number of the verb in the text. The expression thus considered refers to the most distinguished persons of both sexes. Cureton states that it alludes to those who especially belonged to the ministry of the church.
84. a It appears that this rebellious son did not reign till years after the death of Abgar. There must consequently have been another, who was the immediate successor of Abgar; and the name of this successor was Ma'nu, who is said to have reigned seven years, according to what is stated by Assemani, Bibl. Orient, tom. i. p. 421. The successor of Ma'nu was his brother, also by name Ma'nu, and he reigned fourteen years. Moses of Chorene, liv. II. ch. xxxiv., says of this prince: "Il ouvrit les temples des idoles, embrassa le culte des païens. Il envoie dire à Attée, 'Fais moi une coiffure en toile tissée d'or, comme celles que tu faisais autrefois pour mon père.' Il reçut cette réponse d'Attée: 'Mes mains ne feront point de coiffure pour un prince indigne, qui n' adore pas le Christ Dieu vivant.' Aussitôt, le roi d'ordonner à un de ses gens d'armes de couper les pieds à Attée. Le soldat étant allé et ayant vu le saint personnage assis dans la chaire doctorale, avec son glaive lui coupa les jambes, et aussitôt le saint rendit l'esprit."
85. b Wickedness. In Cureton's text the word is in the singular number.
86. a In p. 39, it is said that Addai made Palut an Elder. It would seem, therefore, that this whole paragraph, as Cureton observes, must have been introduced into the text at a later period, and that too by some careless, ignorant person.
87. b In Cureton's text the word is Rome, which is right. The name found in our MS. is obviously a mistake.

Acts of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, One of the Twelve[1]

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http://biblestudy.churches.net/CCEL/FATHERS2/ANF08/ANF08103.HTM#P8319_2661690



Lebbaeus, who also is Thaddaeus, was of the city of Edessa-and it is the metropolis of Osroene, in the interior of the Armenosyrians-an Hebrew by race, accomplished and most learned in the divine writings. He came to Jerusalem to worship in the days of John the Baptist; and having heard his preaching and seen his angelic life, he was baptized, and his name was called Thaddaeus. And having seen the appearing of Christ, and His teaching, and His wonderful works, he followed Him, and became His disciple; and He chose him as one of the twelve, the tenth apostle according to the Evangelists Matthew and Mark.

In those times there was a governor of the city of Edessa, Abgarus by name. And there having gone abroad the fame of Christ, of the wonders which He did, and of His teaching, Abgarus having heard of it, was astonished, and desired to see Christ, and could not leave his city and government. And about the days of the Passion and the plots of the Jews, Abgarus, being seized by an incurable disease, sent a letter to Christ by Ananias the courier,[2] to the following effect:-To Jesus[3] called Christ, Abgarus the governor of the country of the Edessenes, an unworthy slave. The multitude of the wonders done by thee has been heard of by me, that thou healest the blind, the lame, and the paralytic, and curest all the demoniacs; and on this account I entreat thy goodness to come even to us, and escape from the plottings of the wicked Jews, which through envy they set in motion against thee. My city is small, but large enough for both. Abgarus enjoined Ananias to take accurate account of Christ, of what appearance He was, and His stature, and His hair, and in a word everything.

And Ananias, having gone and given the letter, was carefully looking at Christ, but was unable to fix Him in his mind. And He knew as knowing the heart, and asked to wash Himself; and a towel[4] was given Him; and when He had washed Himself, He wiped His face with it. And His image having been imprinted upon the linen, He gave it to Ananias, saying: Give this, and take back this message, to him that sent thee: Peace to thee and thy city! For

because of this I am come, to suffer for the world, and to rise again, and to raise up the forefathers. And after I have been taken up into the heavens I shall send thee my disciple Thaddaeus, who shall enlighten thee, and guide thee into all the truth, both thee and thy city. And having received Ananias, and fallen down and adored the likeness, Abgarus was cured of his disease before Thaddaeus came.

And after the passion, and the resurrection, and the ascension, Thaddaeus went to Abgarus; and having found him in health, he gave him an account of the incarnation of Christ, and baptized him, with all his house. And having instructed great multitudes, both of Hebrews and Greeks. Syrians and Armenians, he baptized them in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, having anointed them with the holy perfume; and he communicated to them of the undefiled mysteries of the sacred body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and delivered to them to keep and observe the law of Moses, and to give close heed to the things that had been said by the apostles in Jerusalem. For year by year they came together to the passover, and again he imparted to them the Holy Spirit.

And Thaddaeus along with Abgarus destroyed idol-temples and built churches; ordained as bishop one of his disciples, and presbyters, and deacons, and gave them the rule of the psalmody and the holy liturgy. And having left them, he went to the city of Amis, great metropolis of the Mesechaldeans and Syrians, that is, of Mesopotamia-Syria, beside the river Tigris. And he having gone into the synagogue of the Jews along with his disciples on the Sabbath-day, after the reading of the law the high priest said to Thaddaeus and his disciples: Men, whence are you? and why are you here?

And Thaddaeus said: No doubt you have heard of what has taken place in Jerusalem about Jesus Christ, and we are His disciples, and witnesses of the wonderful things which He did and taught, and how through hatred the chief priests delivered Him to Pilate the procurator of Judaea. And Pilate, having examined Him and found no case,[5] wished to let Him go; but they cried out, If thou let him go, thou art not Caesar's friend, because he proclaims himself king. And he being afraid, washed his hands in the sight of the multitude, and said, I am innocent of the blood of this man; see ye to it. And the chief priests answered and said, His blood be upon us and our children. And Pilate gave him up to them. And they took Him, and spit upon Him, with the soldiers, and made a great mock of Him, and crucified Him, and laid Him in the tomb, and secured it well, having also set guards upon Him. And on the third day before dawn He rose, leaving His burial-clothes in the tomb. And He was seen first by His mother and other women, and by Peter and John first of my fellow disciples, and thereafter to us the twelve, who ate and drank with Him after His resurrection for many days. And He sent us in His name to proclaim repentance and remission of sins to all the nations, that those who were baptized, having had the kingdom of the heavens preached to them, would rise up incorruptible at the end of this age; and He gave us power to expel demons, and heal every disease and every malady, and raise the dead.

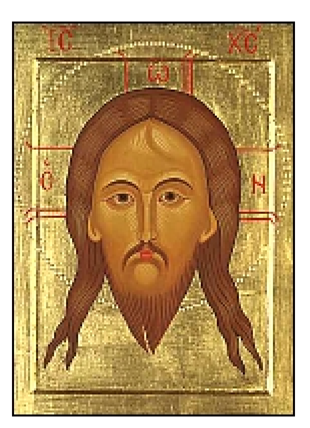
And the multitudes having heard this, brought together their sick and demoniacs. And Thaddaeus, having gone forth along with his disciples, laid his hand upon each one of them, and healed them all by calling upon the name of Christ. And the demoniacs were healed before Thaddaeus came near them, the spirits going out of them. And for many days the people ran together from different places, and beheld what was done by Thaddaeus. And hearing his teaching, many believed, and were baptized, confessing their sins.

Having therefore remained with them for five years, he built a church; and having appointed as bishop one of his disciples, and presbyters, and deacons, and prayed for them, he went away, going round the cities of Syria, and teaching, and healing all the sick; whence he brought many cities and countries to Christ through His teaching. Teaching, therefore, and evangelizing along with the disciples, and healing the sick, he went to Berytus, a city of Phoenicia by the sea;[6] and there, having taught and enlightened many, he fell asleep on the

twenty-first[7] of the month of August. And the disciples having come together, buried him with great honour; and many sick were healed, and they gave glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Transfert d'Edesse à Constantinople
de l'Image non faite de main d'homme
de Notre Seigneur, Dieu et Sauveur Jésus-Christ,

Image que l'on appelle aussi
le Saint MANDYLION



http://www.maison-russie.fr/invites/icone/saints_fetes/textes/mandylion.html

29/08 - 16/08

Au temps de la vie terrestre de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, le roi d'Édesse, Abgar qui souffrait gravement de lèpre et d'inflammation des articulations, entendit parler des guérisons innombrables que Jésus accomplissait. Comme il ne pouvait se déplacer, ni même se montrer à ses sujets, il envoya à Jérusalem son archiviste, Ananie, muni d'une lettre adressée à Jésus, dans laquelle le souverain demandait au Sauveur de venir jusqu'à lui pour le guérir, et il lui proposait de s'installer à Edesse pour échapper aux machinations des Juifs. Il chargea en outre Ananie, qui était un peintre habile, de faire le portrait de celui dont on disait qu'il était Fils de Dieu. Arrivé à destination, Ananie remit la lettre au Seigneur qui se trouvait entouré d'une grande foule et, montant sur une pierre d'où il pouvait mieux le voir, il s'efforça de faire une esquisse. Mais il lui fut impossible de fixer les traits du Sauveur, car son visage semblait changer sans cesse d'aspect, sous l'effet de la grâce indicible qui s'en dégageait. Le Christ, qui sonde les coeurs et les pensées des hommes, devina le dessein d'Ananie et, voulant montrer qu'on ne peut séparer son humanité de sa divinité, Il donna satisfaction à son pieux désir en accomplissant un grand miracle. Il se fit apporter une petite bassine, s'y lava le visage et l'essuya avec un linge plié en quatre. Aussitôt ses traits se trouvèrent imprimés de manière indélébile sur ce Mandylion, sans le secours d'une main humaine. Il le remit alors à Ananie avec une lettre destinée à Abgar, dans laquelle Il expliquait qu'il lui fallait accomplir à Jérusalem le dessein éternel de Dieu pour le salut des hommes. Mais Il lui promettait qu'une fois sa mission terminée, quand Il serait remonté au Ciel, Il lui enverrait un de ses disciples, pour lui procurer le salut de l'âme et du corps.

Le roi Abgar reçut Ananie avec grande joie et se prosterna devant l'image de la Sainte Face avec foi et amour, de sorte qu'il se trouva presque complètement guéri de sa lèpre, à l'exception d'une plaie qui lui restait au front. Après l'Ascension de Notre Seigneur et la Pentecôte, le Saint Apôtre Thaddée fut envoyé à Édesse où, proclamant la Bonne Nouvelle, il baptisa le roi et une grande partie de la population. En sortant de la fontaine baptismale Abgar se trouva complètement guéri et rendit grâces à Dieu. Par la suite, il montra une si grande dévotion à l'Icône "Non Faite de main d'homme" qu'il la fit placer dans une niche, où se

trouvait préalablement une idole, au-dessus de la porte principale de la ville, avec l'inscription: « Christ Dieu, quiconque espère en Toi ne connaîtra jamais le malheur. » Et tous ceux qui entraient dans la ville devaient la vénérer. Il en fut ainsi pendant tout le règne d'Abgar et de son fils. Mais lorsque son petit-fils s'assit sur le trône, il entreprit de faire retourner son peuple au paganisme et forma le projet de détruire l'Icône. Averti de ce dessein par une vision, l'Evêque d'Édesse fit boucher la niche où se trouvait l'Image, après avoir placé devant elle une lampe allumée.

De nombreuses années passèrent et, bien que le royaume fût redevenu Chrétien, on oublia néanmoins l'existence de l'Icône. Lorsque le roi des Perses Chosroês assiégea la ville (en 544), jetant tous ses habitants dans une grande angoisse, l'Evêque d'alors, Eulalios, eut une vision lui révélant l'endroit où se trouvait l'Icône du Sauveur, par la protection de laquelle ils pourraient vaincre. L'Evêque fit dégager la cavité, et quelle ne fut pas sa surprise en découvrant non seulement l'icône intacte, mais en constatant aussi qu'après cinq cents ans, la veilleuse se trouvait encore allumée. De plus, sur la brique qui bouchait la cavité, il trouva imprimée la réplique exacte de l'image de la Sainte Face5. Les habitants rassemblés en hâte formèrent une longue procession, portant les deux Saints trophées dans un grand tumulte, qui jeta l'effroi dans les rangs des assiégeants. Et quand l'Evêque les aspergea avec l'huile de la veilleuse, elle se transforma en un feu ardent qui leur fit prendre la fuite.

Tombée quelques années après aux mains des Perses, puis reprise par l'empereur Héraclius (628), la ville d'Edesse fut bientôt conquise par les Arabes. L'armée chrétienne l'ayant reprise, l'empereur Romain Lécapène s'empressa de faire transférer à Constantinople le Saint Mandylion et les lettres d'Abgar (15 août 944). Accueillie par une foule immense, la Sainte Image, prototype de toutes les Icônes chrétiennes6 fut d'abord déposée dans l'église des Blachernes, puis, le lendemain, à Sainte-Sophie, et de là dans l'église de la Mère de Dieu du Phare, dans l'enceinte du palais, pour la protection de la Reine des villes et de tout le peuple.

N.B. : Dans une église orthodoxe, la reproduction du Saint Mandylion se trouve normalement soit au-dessus des "Portes Saintes" donnant accès au sanctuaire, soit au-dessus des "portes royales" qui séparent la nef du narthex.

Après la prise de Constantinople par les Croisés en 1204, on perdit la trace du Mandylion d'Edesse. Selon certains, il aurait été parmi les reliques achetées par Louis IX en 1247, qui, déposées dans la Sainte-Chapelle à Paris, furent détruites lors de la Révolution. On a cru par ailleurs l'identifier au Suaire de Turin, dont la photographie en négatif révèle une effigie ayant une ressemblance frappante avec le type iconographique de la Sainte Face. Mais cette hypothèse séduisante semble aujourd'hui devoir être rejetée.

Commémoration de la découverte à Constantinople de l'icône "non faite de main d'homme" de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ

(vers 580).

http://www.maison-russie.fr/invites/icone/saints_fetes/textes/mandylion.html

24/08 - 11/08

On raconte que sous le règne de l'empereur Tibère (578-582), une noble femme de rang sénatorial, nommée Marie, qui souffrait d'une maladie incurable et qui, désespérant de tout secours humain, s'en était remise à Notre Seigneur. Jésus-Christ, sollicita des Prêtres qui servaient l'église où se trouvait l'Icône non faite de main d'homme, l'autorisation de garder la précieuse Relique dans sa demeure pendant quarante jours. A l'issue de cette période, au cours de laquelle elle pria instamment devant l'Icône, son mal empira de manière insupportable, et ne pouvant se lever de sa couche, elle demanda à l'une de ses servantes de lui apporter la Sainte Effigie pour la vénérer. Quand elle ouvrit la porte de la chapelle, la servante resta saisie de stupeur, car une flamme de feu, qui atteignait le plafond, sortait du coffret où était déposée l'Icône et remplissait toute la pièce d'une violente lumière. Elle appela sa maîtresse, les autres servantes et les Prêtres, et tous tombèrent à terre devant ce spectacle en criant: "Kyrie eleison!" pendant un long moment. Après que le Prêtre eut dit une prière, la flamme s'affaiblit peu à peu et l'on parvint enfin à ouvrir le coffret. Et, ô miracle, tous purent alors constater que l'Icône était intacte et que sur le linge précieux que Marie avait déposé pour la protéger s'était imprimée une copie exacte de l'Icône "non faite de main d'homme". On déposa cette copie sur le corps de la malade qui fut aussitôt guérie et rendait gloire à Dieu pour son ineffable condescendance. Après quelques années, la pieuse Marie ayant reçu la révélation de son prochain décès, remit cette image à Saint Domitien, Evêque de Mélitène, qui se trouvait alors dans la capitale, et le chargea de la déposer au couvent de l'Ascension à Mélitène.
Lorsque, sous le règne d'Héraclius (615), les Perses attaquèrent l'Empire byzantin, les religieuses de ce Monastère se réfugièrent à Constantinople, où le Patriarche Serge leur céda un Monastère, mais il garda contre leur gré la précieuse Image. Une série de fléaux s'étant bientôt abattus sur l'Empire et sur l'Eglise, le prélat reçut pendant son sommeil la révélation que son larcin en était la cause, aussi s'empressa-t-il de restituer l'Icône aux moniales et la paix revint.

La légende dorée de Jacques de Voragine : Saint Simon et saint Jude, apôtres

http://www.abbaye-saint-benoit.ch/voragine/tome03/160.htm

Simon signifie obéissant ou triste. Il eut deux surnoms, car on l'appela Simon le Zélé, et Simon le Cananéen, de Cana, bourg de la Galilée, où le Seigneur changea l'eau en vin. En outre Zélé et Cananéen sont tout un, puisque Cana signifie zèle. Or, saint Simon posséda l'obéissance en accomplissant les préceptes; la tristesse en compatissant aux affligés; le zèle en travaillant constamment avec ardeur au salut des âmes. Jude veut dire confessant ou glorieux : ou bien il vient de (224) donnant jubilation. En effet, il confessa la foi, il posséda la gloire du royaume et la jubilation de la joie intérieure. Il eut beaucoup de surnoms : car il fut appelé Judas, frère de Jacques, comme frère de saint Jacques le Mineur; 2° il fut appelé Thaddée, qui veut dire s'emparant du prince, ou bien Thaddée vient de Thadea et Deus. Thadea signifie vêtement royal. Il fut le vêtement royal de Dieu par les vertus qui l'ont orné et par où il a pris le prince J.-C.; ou Thaddée vient de Quasi tam Deus, c'est-à-dire grand comme Dieu, par son adoption ; 3° dans l'Histoire ecclésiastique, il est nommé Leben, qui veut dire coeur, ou petit coeur, c'est-à-dire qui orne son coeur, ou bien Lebens, comme on dirait Lebes, bassin ; coeur par sa magnanimité; petit cœur par sa pureté; bassin par: sa plénitude de grâces, puisqu'il a mérité d'être comme une chaudière, un vase de vertus et de grâces. Leur passion et leur légende furent écrites en hébreu par Abdias, évêque de Babylone, qui avait reçu l'épiscopat des mains des apôtres eux-mêmes. Throphée, disciple d'Abdias, les traduisit en grec, et Africanus en latin.

Simon de Cana et Jude Thaddée étaient les frères de saint Jacques le mineur, et fils de Marie Cléophé qui fut mariée à Alphée. Jude fut envoyé à Abgare, roi d'Edesse, par saint Thomas, après l'ascension du Seigneur. On lit en effet dans l'Histoire ecclésiastique * que cet Abgare adressa une lettre ainsi conçue à N.S. J.-C. : « Abgare, roi, fils d'Euchassias, à Jésus, le bon Sauveur, qui a apparu dans le pays de Jérusalem, salut : J'ai entendu parler de vous et des guérisons que vous faites, sans employer ni médicaments, ni herbes : d'un mot vous faites voir les aveugles, marcher droit les boiteux, les lépreux sont purifiés et les morts reviennent à la vie. Ayant entendu raconter de

* Eusèbe, l. I, c. XIII.

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vous toutes ces merveilles, je pense de deux choses l'une, ou que vous êtes Dieu et que vous êtes descendu du ciel afin d'opérer ces prodiges, ou que vous êtes le fils de Dieu, si vous agissez ainsi. C'est pourquoi je vous écris pour vous prier de prendre la peine de venir me voir et me guérir d'une douleur qui me tourmente depuis longtemps. J'ai su encore que les Juifs murmurent contre vous et veulent vous faire un mauvais parti, venez donc chez moi; j'ai une ville petite, il est vrai, mais convenable, qui peut suffire à deux personnes. » N.-S. J.-C. lui répondit en ces termes « Vous êtes bienheureux d'avoir cru en moi, sans m'avoir vu ; car il est écrit de moi que ceux qui ne me voient pas, croiront, et que ceux qui me voient, ne croiront point. Quant à ce que vous m'avez écrit d'aller chez vous, il faut que s'accomplissent toutes les choses pour lesquelles j'ai été envoyé, et ensuite que je sois reçu de celui qui m'a envoyé. Après mon ascension, je vous enverrai un de mes disciples pour vous guérir, et vous vivifier. » Alors Abgare comprenant qu'il ne pouvait pas voir J.-C. en personne, envoya (c'est ainsi qu'on le trouve dans une histoire antique, d'après le témoignage de Jean Damascène, l. IV) un peintre à Jésus pour faire son portrait afin devoir au moins dans son image celui qu'il

ne pouvait voir en personne. Mais quand le peintre était auprès de Jésus, il ne pouvait voir distinctement sa face, ni tenir les yeux fixés sur lui, à cause de l'éclat extraordinaire qui partait de sa tête, de sorte qu'il ne put le peindre comme il en avait reçu l'ordre. Le Seigneur, voyant cela, prit un vêtement qui servait de linge au peintre (226), et le mettant sur sa figure, il y imprima ses traits et l'envoya au roi Abgare qui le désirait. Or, tel était le portrait du Seigneur d'après cette histoire antique, toujours selon le témoignage de Jean de Damas : Il avait de beaux yeux, des sourcils épais, la figure longue et légèrement penchée, ce qui est un signe de maturité.
Or, cette lettre de Notre-Seigneur J.-C. a, dit-on, une telle vertu, que dans cette ville d'Edesse aucun hérétique ni aucun païen n'y saurait vivre, et un tyran quelconque n'oserait y faire mal à personne *. En effet, s'il arrive qu'une nation vienne attaquer cette ville à main armée, un enfant, debout au haut de la porte, lit cette lettre et le même jour, les ennemis, soit qu'ils aient peur, prennent la fuite, soit qu'ils veulent la paix, entrent en composition avec les citoyens ; c'est ce qu'on rapporte être autrefois arrivé : mais dans la suite la ville fut prise et profanée par les Sarrasins ; elle avait perdu son privilège en raison des péchés innombrables qui s'étaient commis publiquement dans tout l'Orient. Quand Notre-Seigneur fut monté au ciel (ainsi le lit-on dans l'Histoire ecclésiastique, l. I, c. XIII), l'apôtre saint Thomas envoya Thaddée, autrement dit Jade, au roi Abgare, pour accomplir la promesse de Dieu. Arrivé auprès d'Abgare, après qu'il lui eut déclaré être le disciple à lui promis par Jésus, le roi vit dans le visage de Thaddée une splendeur admirable et divine. A cette vue, stupéfait et effrayé, il adora le Seigneur en disant : « Vraiment vous êtes le disciple

* Ordéric Vital, l. II.

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de Jésus, fils de Dieu, qui m'a écrit: «Je vous enverrai quelqu'un de mes disciples pour vous guérir et vous donner la vie. » Thaddée lui dit : « Si vous croyez au Fils de Dieu, vous obtiendrez dit ce que votre cœur désire. » Abgare répondit : « Je crois de vrai, et les Juifs qui l'ont crucifié je les égorgerais volontiers, si j'en avais le pouvoir et si l'autorité des Romains n'était pour moi un obstacle insurmontable. » Or, comme Abgare était lépreux, lit-on en quelques livres, Thaddée prit la lettre du Sauveur en frotta la face du roi et aussitôt il recouvra la santé la plus parfaite. — Par la suite, Jude, prêcha dans, la Mésopotamie et dans le Pont, et Simon en Egypte. Ensuite, ils vinrent tous les deux en Perse où ils rencontrèrent deux magiciens, Laroës et Arphaxat, que saint Mathieu avait chassés de l'Ethiopie. A cette époque, Baradach, général du roi de Babylone, avant de partir pour combattre les Indiens, ne pouvait obtenir aucune réponse de. ses dieux : mais en allant au temple d'une ville voisine, on apprit que l'arrivée des apôtres ! était la cause pour laquelle les dieux ne pouvaient répondre. Alors le général les fit chercher et quand il les eut trouvés, il leur demanda qui ils étaient et ce qu'ils étaient venus faire. Les apôtres répondirent: « Si c'est notre nation que vous voulez connaître, nous sommes hébreux; si c'est notre condition, nous déclarons être les serviteurs da Christ; si vous voulez savoir le motif de notre venue, c'est pour vous sauver. » Le général leur répartit : « Quand je serai revenu vainqueur, je vous entendrai. » Les apôtres lui dirent : « Il y aurait pour vous bien plus d'avantage à connaître celui qui peut ou vous faire (228) remporter la victoire ou du moins disposer les rebelles à la paix. » Le général leur répondit: « Je vois que vous êtes plus puissants que nos dieux ; annoncez-nous donc d'avance, je vous prie, l'issue de la guerre. » Les apôtres lui dirent : « Afin que vous sachiez que vos dieux sont des menteurs, nous leur ordonnons de répondre à vos demandes et, en disant ce qu'ils ignorent, nous allons vous prouver qu'ils ont menti en tout point. » Alors les prêtres des idoles prédirent une grande bataille dans laquelle beaucoup de monde serait massacré de part et d'autre. Les apôtres se

mirent alors à rire, et le général leur dit : « Moi, je suis saisi de crainte, et vous, vous riez? » Les apôtres répondirent : « Ne craignez rien, car la paix est entrée ici avec nous, et demain, à la troisième heure, les ambassadeurs des Indiens viendront vous trouver, faire leur soumission et implorer la paix. » Alors les prêtres se mirent à éclater de rire aussi, en disant au général: « Ces gens-là veulent vous inspirer de la sécurité, afin que ne vous tenant pas sur vos gardes, vous soyez défait par nos ennemis. » Les apôtres reprirent : « Nous ne vous avons pas dit : attendez un mois, mais un jour, et demain vous serez vainqueur et vous aurez la paix. » Alors le général les fit garder tous les deux, afin de leur rendre hommage, s'ils avaient dit la vérité sur ce qui devait échoir, ou bien de les punir pour leur mensonge criminel. Le lendemain donc, ce que les apôtres avaient prédit, s'étant réalisé, et le général ayant voulu faire brûler les prêtres, il en fut empêché par les apôtres qui avaient été envoyés non pour tuer les vivants, mais pour ressusciter les morts.

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Alors le général, plein d'admiration de ce qu'ils n'avaient pas laissé tuer les prêtres des idoles et de ce qu'ils ne voulaient accepter rien de leurs richesses, les conduisit au roi: « Prince, lui dit-il, voici des dieux cachés sous des figures d'hommes ! » et après lui avoir raconté,. en présence des magiciens, tout ce qui s'était passé, ceux-ci, excités par l'envie, dirent que c'étaient des gens rusés et qu'ils méditaient de mauvais projets contre l'État. Le général leur dit : « Si vous l'osez, luttez avec eux. » Les magiciens lui dirent: « Si tu veux voir qu'ils ne pourront parler en notre présence, qu'on amène ici les hommes les plus éloquents, et si, devant nous, ils osent ouvrir la bouche, vous aurez la preuve que nous ne sommes propres à rien. » Un grand nombre d'avocats ayant été amenés, à l'instant, ils devinrent muets en présence des mages, au point qu'ils ne pouvaient pas même manifester par des signes qu'ils étaient incapables de parler. Et les magiciens dirent au roi : « Afin que tu saches que nous sommes des dieux, nous allons leur permettre de parler, mais ils ne pourront se promener; puis nous leur rendrons la faculté de marcher, mais nous ferons qu'ils ne voient pas, bien qu'ayant les yeux ouverts. » Quand tout cela eut été exécuté, le général mena les avocats honteux et confus aux apôtres: mais les avocats ayant vit que ceux-ci étaient vêtus grossièrement, ils les méprisèrent intérieurement. Simon leur dit : « Souvent il arrive que dans des écrins d'or et semés de pierreries se trouvent renfermés des objets sans valeur, et que dans les plus viles bottes de bois soient rangés des colliers de perles d'un grand prix. Or, qui (230) désire devenir le propriétaire d'une chose, fait moins d'attention au contenant qu'au contenu. Promettez-nous donc d'abandonner le culte des idoles et d'adorer le Dieu invisible; de notre côté, nous ferons le signe de la croix sur vos fronts et vous pourrez confondre les magiciens. » Après en avoir fait la promesse et avoir été signés au front, les avocats retournèrent de nouveau chez le roi, auprès duquel se trouvaient encore les magiciens, qui n'eurent plus le moindre empire sur eux; et ils s'en moquèrent devant tout le monde; alors les magiciens irrités firent venir beaucoup de serpents. Aussitôt le roi donna ordre de faire venir les apôtres qui remplirent leurs manteaux des serpents et les jetèrent sur les magiciens en disant : « Au nom du Seigneur, vous ne mourrez point, mais vous serez déchirés par les serpents et vous pousserez des cris de douleur qui ressembleront à des mugissements. »
Et comme les serpents leur rongeaient les chairs, et que ces malheureux hurlaient comme des loups, le roi et les autres priaient les apôtres de laisser tuer les magiciens par les serpents. Les apôtres leur répondirent : « Nous avons été envoyés pour ramener de la mort à la vie, mais non pour précipiter de la vie dans la mort. » Et, après avoir fait une prière, ils ordonnèrent aux serpents de reprendre tout le poison qu'ils avaient injecté, et ensuite de retourner dans leur repaire. Or, les douleurs supportées par les magiciens, au moment où les serpents reprirent leur poison, furent plus vives que celles qu'ils avaient ressenties quand leurs chairs étaient

dévorées. Les apôtres leur (231) dirent : « Pendant trois jours, vous ressentirez de la douleur; mais, le troisième jour, vous serez guéris, afin que vous renonciez alors à votre malice. » Trois jours s'étant écoulés, sans que les magiciens pussent ni manger, ni boire, ni dormir, tant leurs souffrances étaient grandes, les apôtres vinrent les trouver et leur dirent : « Le Seigneur n'agrée pas qu'on le serve par force; levez-vous donc, soyez guéris, et allez avec la faculté de faire librement ce que vous voulez. » Ils persistèrent dans leur malice, et s'enfuirent loin des apôtres, contre lesquels ils ameutèrent Babylone presque tout entière. — Après, quoi, la fille d'un général conçut par fornication, et en mettant un fils au monde, elle accusa un saint diacre de lui avoir fait violence, en disant qu'elle avait conçu de son fait. Or, comme les parents voulaient tuer le diacre, les apôtres arrivent et s'informent de l'époque de la naissance de l'enfant. On leur répondit: « Aujourd'hui même, à la première heure du jour. » Alors, les apôtres dirent : « Apportez l'enfant, et faites venir aussi le diacre que vous accusez. » Quand cela fut fait, les apôtres dirent à l'enfant : « Dis, enfant, au nom du Seigneur, si ce diacre a eu pareille audace.» A cela, l'enfant reprit : « Ce diacre est chaste et saint; jamais il n'a souillé sa chair. » Or, comme les parents de la jeune fille insistaient pour que les apôtres demandassent quel avait été l'auteur du crime, ceux-ci répondirent : « Notre devoir est de délivrer les innocents, mais non de perdre les coupables. » — A la même époque, deux tigres très féroces, renfermés chacun dans une fosse, s'échappèrent et dévorèrent tous ceux (232) qu'ils rencontraient. Les apôtres vinrent à eux et, au nom du Seigneur, ils les rendirent doux comme des agneaux. Les apôtres voulurent s'en aller, mais, sur la prière qu'on leur en fit, ils restèrent encore un an et trois mois ; dans cet intervalle, plus de soixante mille hommes, sans compter les petits enfants, furent baptisés avec le roi et les princes.

Les magiciens dont on vient de parler vinrent à une ville nommée Suanir, où se trouvaient 70 prêtres des idoles qu'ils animèrent contre les apôtres, afin qu'à leur arrivée en ce pays, on les forçât à sacrifier ou qu'on les exterminât. Lors donc que les apôtres eurent parcouru toute la province et qu'ils furent parvenus jusqu'à cette ville, les prêtres et tout le peuple se saisissent d'eux et les conduisent au temple du Soleil, Les démons se mirent alors à crier, par l'organe des énergumènes : « Qu'y a-t-il entre vous et nous, apôtres du Dieu vivant ? Voici qu'à votre entrée, nous sommes brûlés par les flammes. » L'ange du Seigneur apparut dans le même moment aux apôtres, et leur dit : « Choisissez de deux choses l'une, ou bien que ces gens meurent à l'instant, ou bien que vous soyez martyrs. » Les apôtres répondirent : « Il faut adorer la miséricorde de Dieu, afin qu'elle les convertisse et qu'elle nous conduise à la palme du martyre. » Après avoir imposé silence, les apôtres dirent : « Pour vous convaincre que ces idoles sont pleines de démons, voyez, nous leur commandons de sortir et de briser chacun sa statue. » Aussitôt, deux Ethiopiens, noirs et nus, sortirent, au grand effroi de tout le monde, des statues et, après les avoir brisées, se retirèrent en (233) poussant des cris horribles. A cette vue, les prêtres se jetèrent sur les apôtres et les égorgèrent tout aussitôt. Or,. à l'instant même, quoique le ciel fût fort serein; il se fit entendre des coups de tonnerre si violents, que le temple se fendit, en trois endroits, et que deux magiciens, frappés par la foudre, furent réduits en charbon. Le roi transporta les corps des apôtres dans sa ville, et fit élever en leur honneur une église d'une magnificence admirable. — Quant à saint Simon, on trouve en plusieurs. endroits qu'il fut attaché à une croix, fait attesté par Isidore, dans son Livre sur la mort des Apôtres ; par Eusèbe, dans son Histoire ecclésiastique; par Bède, dans son Commentaire sur les actes des Apôtres, et par maître Jean Beleth, dans sa Somme. Ils prétendent qu'après avoir prêché en Égypte , il revint à Jérusalem, et quand saint Jacques le Mineur fut mort, il fut choisi d'une voix unanime par les apôtres, pour être évêque de cette ville; avant son décès, on raconte qu'il ressuscita trente morts. Aussi chante-t-on dans son office : « Il rendit la vie à trente personnes englouties ans les flots. » Après avoir gouverné l'église de Jérusalem de longues années, et être parvenu à l'âge de 120 ans, du temps de l'empereur Trajan, Atticus, qui exerçait les fonctions de consul à Jérusalem, le fit prendre et accabler d'outrages. En dernier lieu, il le fit

attacher à une croix, tout le monde et le juge admirant qu'un vieillard de 120 ans subît le supplice de la croix. Cependant quelques-uns disent, et cela est exact, que ce ne fut pas l’apôtre Simon qui souffrit le martyre de la croix et fut évêque de Jérusalem, mais que ce fut un autre (234) Simon, fils de Cléophé, frère de Joseph ; fait attesté par Eusèbe, évêque de Césarée, dans sa chronique. Isidore et Bède le disent aussi en leurs chroniques ; car Isidore et Eusèbe rétractèrent, dans la suite, ce qu'ils avaient avancé d'abord ; ceci se prouve par l’autorité de Bède, qui se reproche dans ses rétractations d'avoir partagé ce sentiment. Usuard atteste la même chose aussi dans son Martyrologe.

St Jean Damascène

Extrait du "De fide Orthodoxa" 4.16



CHAPITRE XVI

Des icônes

Certains parmi nous blâment ceux qui adorent et vénèrent les icônes de notre Sauveur et de notre Souveraine, comme celles des autres saints et serviteurs du Christ ; qu'ils sachent qu'au commencement Dieu fit l'homme à son image. En tant que qui nous prosternons-nous devant d'autres ? Si ce n' est qu'ils sont faits à l'image de Dieu. Comme le dit ce savant connaisseur du divin, Basile, « la vénération de l'image va à son modèle ». Le modèle, c'est celui qui est peint sur l'icône et dont vient l'image. Pourquoi le peuple de Moïse se prosternait-il autour du tabernacle portant l'image et le type de ce qui est au ciel, et même de toute la création. Cependant Dieu dit à Moïse « Voici, tu feras tout selon le modèle qui t'a été montré sur la montagne. » (Ex. 25, 40). Et les Chérubins adombrant le propitiatoire n'étaient-ils pas faits de main d'homme ? Quoi de plus renommé que le temple de Jérusalem ? N'était-il pas fait de main d'homme et construit par son art ?

L'Écriture divine condamne ceux qui adorent des statues, mais aussi ceux qui sacrifient aux démons. Or les Grecs sacrifiaient, et les Juifs sacrifiaient, mais les Grecs aux démons et les Juifs à Dieu ; et les sacrifices des Grecs étaient rejetés et condamnés, et ceux des justes étaient acceptés par Dieu. « Noé offrit un sacrifice et Dieu en respira l'agréable odeur », accueillant le parfum des bonnes dispositions envers lui. Ainsi les statues des Grecs, images des démons, se trouvaient rejetées et interdites.

En plus qui peut faire la reproduction du Dieu, invisible, incorporel, incernable, sans figure ? C'est le dernier degré de la démence et de l'impiété que figurer le divin. D'où le peu d'usage des icônes dans l'Ancien Testament, mais dès lors que Dieu, dans ses entrailles de miséricorde, est véritablement devenu homme pour notre salut, et cela non pas comme pour Abraham et pour les prophètes, auxquels il est apparu sous l'aspect d'un homme, mais parce

que devenu véritablement, essentiellement homme, il a passé sa vie sur terre, s'est mêlé aux hommes, a fait ses miracles, a souffert, a été crucifié, ressuscité et a monté au ciel. Toutes ces choses sont arrivées réellement, les hommes les ont vues, on les a reproduites en dessins pour nous en souvenir et pour l'enseignement de ceux qui n'y ont pas assisté en sorte que sans les avoir vues, mais en écoutant et en croyant, nous retrouvions la joie du Seigneur. Comme tout le monde ne savait pas lire ou n'en avait pas le loisir, les Pères ont vu dans ces icônes comme un bref rappel de ces actions sublimes. Souvent, alors même que l'on ne pense pas à la passion du Seigneur, en voyant l'icône de la Crucifixion du Christ, elle nous revient mémoire et, tombant à genoux, nous adorons celui qui est reproduit et non la matière ; pas plus que nous n'adorons la matière des Évangiles ni la matière de la croix, mais l'image gravée dessus. Quelle différence y a-t-il entre une croix sans Christ sculpté et une croix avec ; et de même pour la Théotokos. La vénération pour elle rejaillit sur celui qui par elle s'est incarné. Pareillement les exploits de ces hommes saints nous poussent au courage, au zèle à imiter leur vertu et à chanter la gloire de Dieu. Comme nous le disions, la vénération pour la grandeur des serviteurs prouve nos bonnes pensées envers le commun Maître et la vénération de l'icône rejaillit sur le modèle. Il y a une tradition non-écrite, comme d'adorer tourné vers l'Orient et beaucoup d'autres choses semblables; c'est elle qui nous fait adorer la croix.

On raconte l'histoire suivante : Abgar, roi de la ville d'Edesse avait envoyé un peintre pour faire un portrait du Seigneur et il n'y arrivait pas parce que son visage brillait d'un éclat insoutenable ; le Seigneur couvrit son divin visage de son manteau et celui-ci se trouva reproduit sur le manteau qu'il envoya à Abgarus qui le demandait.

Les apôtres ont laissé bien des traditions non écrites. L'apôtre des gentils, Paul, écrit : « Ainsi, frères tenez ferme aux traditions que nous avons enseignées, soit en parole, soit dans nos lettres. » (2 Thes. 2, 11). Et aux Corinthiens : « Je vous loue, frères, de ce que vous vous rappelez tout ce qui vient de moi et que vous reteniez les traditions comme je vous les ai transmises. » (1 Cor. 11, 2).



Petit poème acrostiche

Visage du Sauveur
Empreint sur une toile
Rayonnant de splendeur
Offert au roi Abgar
Nul peintre ne te fit
Icône sans égale
Que pour un seul regard
Une femme reçut
En recevant la Vie



